Trends of History in Qur'an

Author(s): Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr



بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

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:Writer

Muhammad Baqer Sadr

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point

A collection of the Ayatullah's last lectures on topical exegesis, norms and laws of .history mentioned in the Qur'an, and man, nature and society

Introduction

.In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

An inquiry into the system of the laws which govern the process of history and the effects which historical events produce on the life of society is one of the most important needs of our society at the present juncture. An insight into this system is essential for the continued vitality of our cultural revolution and its extension to other .peoples of the world

There is no doubt if a society wants to free itself from its environmental limitations, suffocating atmosphere and overbearing conditions, it must know to what extent societies are compulsorily regulated by their circumstances and how they can .overcome their limitations in this regard

What is important is only to find out the ways and means of overcoming the limitations and hinderances. It is immaterial to us whether this discovery is called a scientific discovery or is given the name of a religious, philosophical, gnostic or some other kind of unravelling. Now let us see what Ayatullah Sadr has said on this subject from the standpoint of the Qur'an in his last lectures in the Religious Centre,[1] Najaf

.(Ashraf (Iraq

This study is significant, as it relates to the Religious Centre and Ayatullah Sadr. In

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(Hawzah `Ilmiyah) -١

our institutes of learning, study is mostly based on the four sources of law, the Qur'an, the Sunnah, the Reason and the Consensus of the juristic opinions. Naturally in these seats of learning the Qur'an is studied either from the juristic point of view or with a reference to fundamental, philosophical, scholastic and moral questions, which all come under the term of the exegesis(1) of the Qur'an.

In the Religious Centre two different methods of teaching the exegesis are followed. One of them is the old and conventional method and the other is topical. In the first two lectures Ayatullah Sadr has explained in detail the difference between these two methods. According to the traditional method either the Qur'an from its beginning or a particular chapter of it is taken and explained verse by verse, chapter by chapter and word by word.

First the linguistic, grammatical and literary characteristics of every verse are dealt with, and then the subtleties of its meaning are elucidated. Next its historical background and the occasion of its revelation are explained. Simultaneously the relevant traditions(2) and other similar questions are also discussed. In this way the whole Qur'an is expounded. This type of exegesis may be called the split and part by part exegesis(3).

The other method is that of topical exegesis.(4) In this method a particular subject is chosen and studied from various angles. First suitable mental data are formed, and then a reference is made to the Qur'an in order to seek its verdict

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۱- (Tafsir)

۲- (Ahadith)

۳- (Tafsir Tajziyah).

۴- (Tafsir Mauzu'i).

on the subject. From the traditions of the Prophet's progeny it is gathered that this method is more desirable than the other one. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) has said: "Here is the Qur'an. Let it express its opinion". The fact is that the Qur'an can reveal every truth. It is only up to the people to refer their questions to the Qur'an so that it .may answer them

If we refer to the Qur'an in the form of a question an idea which has already been investigated and discussed by various schools of human society, we can be guided by the Qur'an as to which is the best answer. In order to prepare ground for this kind of exegesis, it is necessary that the study of the whole Qur'an should first be completed .in accordance with the first method

In other words to be able to undertake topical study one should to some extent be familiar with the verses connected with the Islamic and Qur'anic questions and should .be able to bring together all the verses concerning the subject under study

This kind of work has already been accomplished in connection with the Islamic law when all the traditions pertaining to each subject have been brought together and elucidated. Ayatullah Sadr wanted to make a topical study of several subjects and deduce from the Qur'an its view on them, but unfortunately he could get the opportunity of completing his study of only one subject, namely the methodology of history

or the philosophy of history. What is important to us is that this subject has been .studied for the first time from religious and Qur'anic point of view

This study has been given the name of 'The Trends of History in the Qur'an'. Now let us see what these words signify and what points they are expected to cover. Here it .may be appropriate to point out that history has several connotations

One of its connotations is the transmitted history that is an account of the events concerning a past subject. Another is the study of the historical events concerning a particular society. The third is a broad view of history detached from every limitation .of time and place

So far we have been studying the Qur'an from the standpoint of the transmitted history or have occasionally studied some past society in the light of what the Qur'an has said about it. In this connection we have been confronted with some difficulties too. For example we find that while relating the stories of the past the Qur'an does not describe the events in the terms of numerical facts. Not that it has any doubts about the figures, but it omits them intentionally. For instance, in the story of the People of :the Cave, the Holy Qur'an says

Some will say: They were three, their dog the fourth, and some say: Five their dog the sixth, guessing at random; and some say: Seven, and their dog the eighth. Say: (O (!Prophet

My Lord is best aware of their number. None knows them except a few. So do not (argue about them. (Surah al-Kahf, ١٨:٢٢

This way of expression shows that the Qur'an intentionally does not pay much attention to transmitted history. For the purpose of being benefited by historical .events, it does not want to make us prisoners of any conventional form

In contrast it wants to break the rigidity of such forms. The Qur'an has an identical attitude in respect of all historical stories. It makes no difference to it whether the events narrated concern such eminent people as the Prophets, or some wicked tyrants or some other extraordinary people. As such we have no right to fill in any gaps in the Qur'anic stories with any lore, myth, guess or our own personal opinion. We have only to find out what Islam (the Qur'an) aims at by narrating these stories. The fact is that Islam has a special philosophy in regard to the nations and the .communities

Similarly it has its own so called sociology. It does not want simply to recount the events, nor is it interested in any particular period of history or in the sociology of any particular people. If Islam has referred to these things, it has done so purely with a view to deduce certain universal laws which govern all human societies and .determine their future course, whether good or bad

Therefore it is of utmost importance for us to find out what laws of

history the Qur'an puts forward so that we may understand our society as well as the past societies, be able to ascertain our future course and distinguish between what is .right and what is wrong

There is no doubt that for this purpose the Qur'an is the only reliable source on which we can depend. If we want to know if there has been any precedent for such a deduction of the laws of history, we see that a great thinker and philosopher, Ibn Khaldun made such deductions eight centuries after the revelation of the Qur'an. He for the first time in `The Introduction' of his history turned his attention to the question of the development of societies and to the basic laws of history. Unfortunately after him his ideas were not pursued further and were almost entirely .forgotten

It was four centuries after Ibn Khaldun that the so called progressive elements of Europe who claim to be the forerunners of all sciences, and experts in every field, realized that human societies are governed by certain laws and norms. They called these laws the philosophy of history. With the passage of time every scholar began to interpret these laws according to his own thinking, his mental background and his .personal whims

Consequently now we are faced with divergent philosophies of history, the most well-known of them being those of Hegel, Toynbee and Marx. Each of these philosophies has its own method. As for our own society, it took eight centuries to

turn its attention to this subject and then abandoned it before long. Others took to it, .but they fell in grave errors, some of which we propose to point out later

Another point which needs clarification before we enter upon our main subject is whether the Qur'an has a right to intervene in the discussion of the norms of history? ?Is it within its bounds to discuss a scientific subject at all

If it is admitted that the Qur'an can put forward the laws of history, this subject becomes of utmost importance to us in our present circumstances. We have many problems of physics, chemistry, nuclear technology, mathematics etc. Can we turn to ?the Qur'an for their solution? Has the Qur'an dealt with scientific subjects

If it has, why has the scientific progress of the Muslims been so much delayed? Why have we reached, even the present level of our culture, at least ۱۰۰۰ years after the revelation of the Qur'an? Should we not have attained this level when the Qur'an was revealed? And if the Qur'an has not dealt with the scientific subjects, why should we ?seek their solution in it now

It is a fact that the Qur'an is not a book of science. But the question is: Why is it not a book of science when science solves so many problems of society? The answer is that science is unable to solve any problem unless and until it runs parallel to the course of guidance. Otherwise it only adds

to the problems and aggravates them. Anyhow, this is a social question and outside .the scope of our present discussion

Briefly it may be said that the Qur'an is a book of Divine guidance. It tells the human beings what will happen in the wake of and in consequence to what they do. There is no information service in any part of the world which may tell us what the .consequences of our deeds will be at a time subsequent to these deeds

The knowledge which science provides is in its entirety based on the causative system, but it cannot envisage the future relation of any cause and its effects. It cannot say in what way the effect produced by a cause will be useful to man and in what way it will be harmful to him, nor can science indicate the direction to which man .should be guided so that he may enjoy the beneficial results of a cause

The function of science is confined to showing only the insipid relation between a cause and its effect. Even to discover this relationship man himself has to make effort and study nature so that his talent may unfold to the extent of understanding this relationship. He can exploit this relationship only through his own endeavour and .experience

All the tribulations and sufferings of the world including the wars, the diseases, the tragic incidents and all other problems and difficulties which man has to face are meant to give him impetus to surmount

the difficulties and to find his way through them. Still the question of Divine guidance is something different. If a man is not religiously guided, he is bound to be swayed by .the ideas and the problems which would ultimately pervert him

It is the Grace of Allah that He guides men and sends for them Holy Books and clear guidance. The Prophets come so that men may not be perplexed and deviate from the right path. Hence it is an indisputable privilege of the Qur'an to guide people. It is also a fact that due attention to the laws and the trends of history is an important part of .guidance, for it protects man from the evils of deviation and perversion

There is an important difference between the laws of history on the one hand and the laws of physics and chemistry on the other. The laws of physics and chemistry, which are based on the causative system of the world, apply to inanimate objects unable to .receive any guidance

On the other hand the laws of societies, though as firm and definite as any scientific laws, apply to human beings. It is the peculiarity of man that he can take himself out of the scope of one law, which he considers to be harmful to him, and put himself .under the purview of another law which he regards as beneficial

In other words he can decide for himself which law should apply to him, whether the law which leads

.him to happiness or the law which leads him to misery. The choice is with man himself

Anyhow, that does not mean that man can violate any law. All that he can do is that instead of being under the purview of one law he may make himself subject to another law. He can do so because it is within his power to make or mar himself. It is for this reason that the Qur'an has paid special attention to the history of the nations and human societies. It has done so mainly with a view to give an opportunity to the .people to derive from the laws of history the best systems suited to them

History helps man in deriving general laws. If the Qur'an has referred only to some laws of history, it is because the Qur'an does not want to curtail the role of man's effort. There is no reason to think that the laws to which it has referred, are the only .laws concerning human life and human society

According to the Qur'an it is man's own duty to find out the trends of history and derive the laws. Man must take this problem seriously, try his best to discover the laws of history and accept their firmness. As an example of the verses which explain the laws of human history, we come across a verse in which the Qur'an in connection :with the Battle of Uhud says

If you have suffered a setback, a similar setback

was suffered by these people (your enemy) also. And We bring about these (vicissitudes in man's life. (Sarah Ale Imran, ٢:١۴٠

No people can say that they will always be victorious, nor are any people condemned to be always defeated. Victory and defeat depend on certain social conditions and are subject to the laws of history. Any nation or community which abides by these laws, gains victory, irrespective of the fact whether there are any virtuous people in it or .not

In fact, what is important is the system prevailing on the whole in a society. A few individuals do not count. That is why it should cause no surprise if in a bad society good people are also affected by adverse social laws, for the destiny of a society is .determined by the conduct of the great majority of its masses

If a society on the whole is perverted, a good man, howsoever exemplary his personal conduct may be, will certainly suffer the evil consequences of the misdeeds :of his society. The Qur'an says

And beware of involving yourselves into a trouble the consequences of which shall (surely not affect in particular those who are wrong-doers. (Surah al-Anfal, ٨:٢۵

This verse conveys the same idea as mentioned above. The behaviour of a society is different from that of the individuals. Although it is the individuals who make society, yet the virtuous individuals singly cannot escape the evil consequences of the misdeeds of their society as a whole, unless they are able to

.change its general condition

The best proof of the correctness of this rule, is provided by the story of Prophet Musa (Moses) and his people, as narrated in the Qur'an. The people of Musa wanted to reach the land of the covenant and settle there. But they asked Prophet Musa to wrest the holy land first from the oppressors with the help of his Lord, Allah and then :invite them to enter it. They said to Prophet Musa

(So go you and your Lord and fight them. We are sitting here. (Surah al-Ma'idah, ۵:۲۲

The Qur'an says that this attitude of theirs proved that they were not fit to gain .victory

He answered: Then this land shall be forbidden to them for forty years during which (period they will be wandering aimlessly across the earth. (Surah al-Ma'idah, ۵:۲۶

And so it happened. Prophet Musa undoubtedly had true faith in Allah, was sincere in his purpose and had heroically carried out a successful struggle against Fir'awn. But because his society was not disciplined and lacked forbearance and spirit of self-.sacrifice, he like others had to wander in the desert and undergo hardships

In this connection the charming interpretation of the Karbala tragedy made by Ayatullah Sadr is note-worthy and thought-provoking. He says that the people of Kufah were coward and timid while the people of Syria were perverted and covetous. The Kufans tolerated the despotic and blood-thirsty rule of the Umayyads. It means social behaviour of theirs was bound to cause disorder and bring about

.calamities

Accordingly the Kufans were beset by adversities, famines and bloodshed: The incident of Karbala in which Imam Husayn and the members of his family suffered very heavily, was one of a series of such incidents. It was a social process which culminated in such a great tragedy. Such a process cannot be halted unless .something is done to change its course

In case we succeed in doing so, we save ourselves from the impact of an adverse law and put ourselves under a different law. Another point is that according to the Qur'an societies are governed by some fixed and unchangeable laws. The Qur'an has laid :much stress on this point. The relevant verses can be divided into several categories

:i) The verses which lay down a general rule - The Qur'an says)

Every nation has a term; when it comes, they cannot put it back a single hour, nor can (they put it forward. (Surah al-A'raf, ۷:۳۴

.This is a universal law of history

ii) There are other verses which refer to the consequences of injustice and) :oppression. One of them says

If Allah took people to task by that which they deserve, He would not leave a single living creature on the surface of the earth; but He reprieves them to an appointed (term. (Surah Fatir, ۳۵:۴۵

No doubt it is within the power of Allah to punish and destroy the unjust and perverted societies immediately, but He has given them some respite. Here it may be pointed out that

as regards to time the law of societies is different from the law of individuals. An individual may be punished or rewarded immediately after doing an evil or good deed. But as it is gathered from a number of verses of the Qur'an, the social changes may .take hundreds or even thousands of years

In the case of societies, the time is relative and only relative promptness is taken into consideration. Hence, one should not expect a quick change in society, for social .changes have their own appointed time under the laws governing them

iii) Some verses of the Qur'an exhort people to study historical events and carry out) investigations about them. In this connection there are several verses of similar :wording. One of them says

Have they not travelled in the land to see what happened to those who were before them? Allah wiped them out. And for the disbelievers there will be the like thereof. ((Surah Muhammad, ۴۷:۱۰

Allah asks those to whom this verse is addressed; why they do not make inquiries and travel in the land to see the deeds of the past people and the results of their doings? Why do they not see how Allah destroyed the disbelievers and the wrongdoers in the past and how he disgraced them? From these verses it becomes clear that society is .governed by fixed and unchangeable laws and norms

Now let us take up our main topic and see what these laws are and how they work. But before

advancing the specimens of these laws it is necessary to mention some of their characteristics, for these characteristics draw a line of demarcation between our .outlook on the norms of history and the outlook of others interested in this question

We believe in three basic characteristics of these norms, by means of which it is .possible to identify the course of history

The first characteristic of the historical norms is their universality. They have no exceptions. The Qur'an has magnificently brought out this point. Wherever it mentions the fate of any people, it adds that to be so is a Divine method or a law. It :firmly says

You will not find for Divine Law any substitute, nor will you find in Divine Law any (change. (Surah al Fatir, ۳۵:۴۳

None can alter these norms or violate these laws. They are fixed and unchangeable. This position is not confined to the material questions of life, but is equally applicable to the question of Divine succour, which also, according to the Qur'an, operates in conformity with the laws and norms of history. As such the laws of society have no .exception

The second point is that the laws of society have a divine aspect or a divine characteristic. This position is somewhat thought-provoking. All physical relations in nature are based on a system of cause and effect. If we overlook this system and consider everything to be spontaneous, miraculous and a direct outcome of Allah's will, we will have to nullify all branches of science and

abrogate the entire causative system. As a result our outlook on science will be totally changed and will become similar to that of Christianity on history as may be gathered .from the sayings of St. Augustine

According to his view the divinity of a thing means the negation of the sequence of causes and effects. In other words, if a thing has a divine aspect, that means that it is directly governed by the will of Allah. Can we also subscribe to this view? No, this view .is irrational and contrary to all scientific knowledge and principles

The view which we hold about the divine method and practice, passes exactly through the same channels as the system of causes and effects. The only thing is that while we accept what science says about the causative and other systems, we also believe .that all systems ultimately depend on Allah

Take a simple example. We know that it rains by the will of Allah. But we do not deny that the process of rainfall begins with the evaporation of sea-water and the rise of vapours. Then with a change in the temperature of the air, vapours again change into liquid and because of the gravity of the earth fall down in the form of the drops of water. We accept all this, but also maintain that at every stage everything depends on Allah, and at no stage causes operate or function independently of Him. That is our .belief as well as our observation

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.It is not a question of any fictitious theory

It is a reality that shows that in all its processes and causative motions the whole world depends on Allah. Although science works on the basis of causative system, it ignores that a reality underlies this system. It is essential to realize that everything depends on Allah, so that man may not lose himself and may not become self-conceited.

All the troubles and all the errors which the Western outlook on science has caused, are due to the false notion that man is not in need of his Creator. Such a notion makes man arrogant and conceited.

Hence one must give up this notion and find out that course, which has been prescribed for him by his Lord, for that course is actually the course along which the world operates. Hence, it is clear that there is a basic difference between the divine aspect which we accord to history and the divine aspect or the divine colour which Christianity accords it.

The third point which is important to us, is that the laws of history are not inconsistent with human freedom. We referred to this point earlier also. Now we quote some verses in support of our view. The Qur'an says:

Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change that which is in their hearts. (Surah ar-Ra'd, ١٣:١١)

In this verse Allah does not mean to say that He would repeal His law if people changed their condition. That is not

the point. The real point is that it is a divine law that people will have one destiny if they change their condition, and quite a different destiny if they do not change and stick to their old habits and customs. Thus while this verse emphasizes the existence of a law, at the same time it confirms man's freedom. At another place the Qur'an :says

(We destroyed these townships because they did wrong. (Surah al-Khaf, ۱۸:۵۹

In this verse an invariable law has been mentioned for obviously nobody is forced to .do wrong

If they continue to tread the right path, We shall give them water to drink in (abundance. (Surah al-Jinn, ۷۲:۱۶

If the people of these towns had believed and practised piety, We would have surely showered on them the blessings of the heaven and the earth. But they disbelieved (and therefore We seized them for their misdeeds. (Surah al-A'raf, ۷:۹۶

You may notice how man has been given a choice of placing himself within the purview of two alternative laws. He has been told that he can place himself under the purview of either of them so that he may be dealt with according to the definite .provisions of the law of his choice

We have already hinted at the important question of divine succour. Here we propose to explain it a little further. Usually people think that divine succour is a concession and favour granted by Allah to some people of His choice. Actually that is not the case. Divine succour

is granted according to its relevant law, and in this case also man's freedom has been .ensured

Thus even entry into paradise and the receipt of divine succour are governed by a law and that law requires perseverance in the face of the oppressors and a steadfast struggle against them. Allah's help comes in the wake of man's own constant effort. This shows that the whole world and all its systems are governed by some law or .other

Recapitulating our discussion we may say that the norms of history have three characteristics. The number of the verses which throw light on them is quite large. We have quoted only a few of them. Referring to the classification of these verses we said that one group of them stipulated the universality of the laws of history. In this :connection we cited the verse saying

Every nation has a term; when it comes, they cannot put it back an hour, nor can they .(put it forward. (Surah Yunus, ۱۰:۴۹, Surah al-A'raf, ۷:۳۴

The second group of them exhorts to the study of that which happened to the past .people

:One such verse says

Have they not travelled in the land to see what happened to those who were before (them?"(Sura ar-Rum, ۳۰:۹

The third group of these verses tells the stories of the Prophets. The Qur'an is concerned only with the teachings that these stories contain and the moral which can .be drawn from them. It is not interested in their outward aspect

As from this

angle all stories are similar to one another, they may be regarded as pages of the Qur'anic science dealing with the norms of history. As we have already emphasized :three qualities of the laws of history should not be forgotten. These qualities are

i) Universality: The Quranic verses clearly show that the norms of history are fixed) and invariable. The Qur'an has emphatically indicated that even in the case of divine succour no exception is admissible. Unlimited divine help cannot be expected. The :Qur'an says

Did you suppose that you would enter paradise while yet upon you has not come the like of that which befell those who passed away before you? They were afflicted by misery and hardship and were so shaken that the Messenger of Allah and those who believed along with him said: `When comes Allah's help? Now surely Allah's help is (near!' (Surah al-Baqarah, ۲:۲۱۴

Allah says: Do not think that you are an exception to the general rule of divine help. The rule about it is firm and it is as applicable to you as it has been to others. The past peoples also had to face similar hardship and setbacks, but they continued their .struggle and remained firm. You should also continue your struggle

In their case the ground for a change was prepared only when they were almost tired of waiting for divine help. Only then the fruit of their patience and fortitude was made ready for them to pluck. Remember that Allah's help is

!in close proximity

It follows from this that divine succour is subject to a well-calculated laws. Similarly the fight against falsehood is also governed by the laws of history. Mere wishes and desires can stir no movement in the domain of the laws of history, nor can they alone :serve any purpose. Allah says

It is not a question of your desire nor that of the desires of the people of the Book. ((Surah al-Nisa, ۴:۱۲۳

.Actually it all depends on what you do

ii) The second quality of the norms of history is their divine aspect. As we have) already pointed out what we believe in this respect is quite different from what Christianity holds regarding the question of divinity. We never cross the limits of the doctrine that everything has a cause, and maintain that all things occur through their .normal channels

The only thing is that besides believing in cause and effect relationship and scientific channels, we also believe that all things depend on their first cause. This belief is necessary so that man may not break away from his origin and may not fall a victim to .arrogance and living in vacuum

iii) The third point or the third quality of the norms of history, which we would like to) emphasize is the question of man's freedom. The norms of history, firm as they are, do not in any way curtail human freedom. In this connection we have already quoted some verses and later also we are going to

cite some more. The most important verse on which this question is based is the :following verse

Surely Allah does not change the condition of a people until they themselves change (what is in their hearts.(Sura ar-Ra'd, ١٣:١١

It is itself a norm of history that the development which a nation makes should come from within it and not imposed on it from outside. These are the points to which we have already referred. The next point we would like to explain is that of the field in .which the norms of history operate

This is a very important question. In this world many incidents take place, which are produced by the cause and effect material relationship, but the norms of history do not apply to them at all. Man is governed by physical, physiological and biological .relations. Someone becomes ill. Someone dies. Someone is involved in an accident

Such incidents may sometimes even change the course of the history of a nation, but still they have nothing to do with the norms of history. In history some very minor .incidents have been of great importance

In connection with the Marwanid Caliphs it is said that a dynasty perished because of urination. It was a mere chance that Marwan II felt the need of passing water. While doing so he was captured by the enemy and killed. With him his dynasty fell. Such incidents are not governed by any law of history. In other words such minor incidents by themselves do not change

.the destiny of nations

Ayatullah Sadr has cited another instance. He says: Had Uthman not been murdered, would the course of history have been as it happened to be, when people with great zeal and farvour rushed to Imam Ali to pledge their allegiance to him, or would history .have turned a different leaf? Similarly it may be asked about the Holy Prophet himself

If in the ١٠th year of the Prophethood the two sad events of the death of the Holy Prophet's wife Lady Khadijah and the death of his uncle, Abu Talib had not occurred, would history have moved as it did and would the Holy Prophet still have migrated? These events may be regarded as the outcome of biological, physiological and temperamental factors concerning Lady Khadijah and Abu Talib, and as such they cannot have any connection with the norms of history. Hence let us find out the actual .sphere of these norms

We know that besides man the cause and effect relationship applies to scientific field also. For example water boils at a particular degree of heat (١٠٠° Centigrade) except on the surface of the sea. Similarly at a particular degree of heat, gas turns into liquid. These properties are invariable and are not subject to any change. But we cannot regard them as the norms of human history, because man's will is not involved in .them in any way

Similarly for an act to be within the scope of the norms of history it is not enough to

have a causative agent. The agent must have some purpose also. In other words he must have an object in view. As such only that act falls within the range of the norms of history which not only has a causative agent but also has an object. This object may .have only mental existence

It may be mentioned that when we think of a cause we look backward from its effect, but when we think of an object we look forward from the effect. As far as the object is concerned the agent has no control over it. He cannot be sure of achieving it. He can .have only a desire and an inner craving for it

For the applicability of the norms of history the existence of this desire, which is merely a mental process, is essential. In short, norms of history apply to those human acts which have an object. Those things for which no object is kept in mind and occur .simply as the result of some cause and effect relationship are outside their scope

Again if we go deeper, we will find that even all those acts which man performs with an object in view, do not fall within the scope of the norms of history. Suppose a man needs a house for his residence. He makes plan for it, purchases a plot of land and engages some engineer and architect. Then he begins to build the house. He does all that with the object of living

there. But so long as he requires that house for his personal use, his action can have no impact on history. When we feel hungry, we look for food. When we feel thirsty we go after water. To satisfy our private needs we do something purposive. We make .deliberate moves

In each case we have an object in our mind. But such acts certainly do not fall within the range of the norms of history. Anyhow, there are some other purposive actions of mass which start a social wave. They have a popular aspect and hence stir a reaction among the masses. All those social actions which have an object and create a wave in society can become historical. Such actions include even vast trading activity and a scientific discovery, which changes society from within. Such are the things to which .the norms of history apply

Hence, the scope of the norms of history becomes clear. Now we know that the laws and the norms of history can be expected to apply to those acts which have three dimensions: (i) the causative dimension, (ii) the purposive dimension and (iii) the .popular dimension

The popular dimension means that the act in question should have the support of society as a whole. It is needless to add that for such acts the whole society will be .called to account by Allah and will be given a collective deed-sheet

In other words people are accountable for their collective as well as their individual acts. An individual

act may affect the individual concerned only or it may affect a society as a whole. The collective acts are the acts of a nation or a community as a whole. The Holy Qur'an :says

And We shall have fastened every man's deeds to his neck. On the Day of Resurrection We shall confront him with a book which he will find wide open. And it will be said to him: Read your book. Today it is enough for you that your soul should call (you to account. (Surah Bani Isra'il, ۱۷:۱۳ - ۱۴

The book mentioned in this verse is the individual deed-sheet. An individual will be called to account for all his deeds whether they affect him only or others also. The :collective deed-sheet is mentioned in the following verse

And you will see each nation crouching, each nation summoned to its book. And it will be said to them: `Today you are requited what you used to do. This Our Book pronounces against you with truth. We have caused all that you did to be recorded'. ((Surah al-Jathiyah, ۴۵:۲۸-۲۹

In this context a collective deed does not mean that all the members of the community or the nation concerned should take part in its performance. Moral support or even tacit approval is enough. In Nahjul Balaghah Imam Ali, the Commander of the faithful, says: "He who is happy with what a people do, should be ".regarded as one of them

In this connection the example of the tribe of Thamud and

the killer of the Prophet Salih's she-camel may be cited. It was only one man of the tribe of Thamud who actually killed the she-camel. But as the whole tribe approved .his action, all were subjected to a celestial punishment

This shows that the will and desire of a nation are enough for the applicability of the laws of history to it. For individual acts the individuals concerned will be brought :before Allah singly. The Qur'an says

There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes before the Beneficent as a slave. Surely He knows their numbers with right numbering. And each one will come to (Him alone. (Surah Maryam, ۱۹:۹۳-۹۵

For the deeds done collectively by a nation or a society there will be a separate .appearance before Allah

And you will see each nation crouching, each nation summoned to its book. (Surah al-(Jathiyah, ۴۵:۲۸

Now we know the scope of the norms of history. We see that all nations will be summoned so that their deed-sheets may be checked. That means that the nations .as such are accountable

Let us now take up the main point. We find that in the Qur'an the norms of history :have been described in three different ways

I. Some norms of history have been described in the form of conditional clauses. Their conditional nature must be noted. The result of this form of expression is that the .relevant verses emphasize on man's freedom

For example, someone says to you: "If you come to the meeting at the

appointed time, you will be able to take part in it." It follows that if you do not come, you will not be able to take part in the meeting. That shows an option. It is up to you whether you come and take part in the meeting or do not come and do not take part in it. This position is quite unlike that of water which must boil at a certain degree of .heat

Of course we can say: "If you provide the necessary heat to it, water will boil." Here you are at liberty to provide or not to provide the necessary heat, for in this case the statement is conditional. Man being the master of his destiny, it is up to him to do or .not to do a thing

An example of conditional verses is that verse which we have already mentioned and :are now quoting it again. This is a verse worth remembering

Surely Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change that which is (in their hearts. .(Sura ar-Ra'd, ۱۳:۱۱

In other words if a nation wants to change its social conditions it should begin to carry out the change from within itself. This verse has the form of a conditional statement. :Here there is another verse

If they continue to tread the right path, We will surely give them water to drink in (abundance. .(Sura al-Jinn, ۷۲:۰۲

Here the right path means the path of justice and equity. Allah says that

if there is an equitable distribution of the essential commodities and there is no extravagance, amassing of wealth, hoarding, wastage and negligence, He will provide .them with abundant produce

On principle we can derive from the Qur'an a general rule. Abundant produce depends on fair distribution. This is a norm of history. We cannot find a single instance of the failure of this rule. All cases of shortages and scarcity are due to man's own extravagance or lethargy. Man can use his freedom to enhance production provided he observes fair distribution. He can create famine also if he indulges in injustice and .encroachment on the rights of others

:Take another following conditional Qur'anic verse

When We intend to destroy a town, We first warn those of its people who have an easy life. If they persist in their wickedness there, they become liable to punishment. (So We totally annihilate them. (Surah Bani Isra'il, ۱۷:۱۶

In other words it is a divine practice that if any nation or the people of any country disobey the commandments of Allah, they are destroyed. The cause of their destruction is not Allah's sovereign power alone. They are destroyed because of their own doings. Allah has granted freedom to man. Man has a choice. He can obey Allah .or disobey Him. If he prefers wickedness, his destruction becomes inevitable

Hence, it is clear to what extent man's own will determines his destiny. The beauty ,(and elegance of this verse lies in its beginning with the word 'iza' (when

its division into a. principal and a subordinate clause and its implying that man's .destiny is in his own hand

This was the first of the various forms in which the norms of history have been .mentioned in the Qur'an

II. The second form is that of a definite statement. These statements are as firm as our statement can be when, for example, we say that a solar eclipse or a lunar eclipse will take place on such and such date at such and such time. The only difference is .that an eclipse is not a human act

Anyhow, we find the specimens of this form in the Qur'an in connection with the norms of history. These definite statements arouse a suspicion that the norms of history conveyed by them are imposed on man, which amounts to predetermination and compulsion of history. Then how can we reconcile man's freedom with the ?compulsion of history

Some have denied man's freedom. They hold that the laws of history are fixed and inexorable. Some others with a view to safeguard man's freedom deny the very existence of any norms of history. Some others maintain that the norms of history do exist, but they are subject to man's will. All these people have failed to resolve this .problem satisfactorily

But we are in no need of any such explanations, for we have shown that conditional clauses adequately guarantee man's freedom. It is man who in all cases determines .the destiny of society and the norms of history

We

will give examples of this kind of norms when we discuss the elements which form .society

III. The third form of the norms of history is a window through which we can see the most important norms and understand a significant feature of history. This form manifests itself in the shape of human tendencies, desires and emotions which are not peculiar to any particular society and have no local colour. They determine how .man thinks and behaves in society

But these tendencies are not as rigid as the rule that water must boil at a particular temperature. There are so many tendencies and cravings which can at least temporarily be checked, curbed and controlled, or can be diverted to a different .direction

Anyhow natural tendencies and cravings cannot be curbed or diverted for a long time, for in that case history itself punishes the defaulters, and the punishment of history is a reality that is not escapable. Sexual desire may be cited as an example of a natural craving that can to a certain extent be curbed. Sexual desire has a definite and direct .link with the instinct of procreation

As such is it possible to curb that instinct and satisfy the sexual desire in some other way? No doubt through various forms of sexual perversion it is possible to satisfy it. There are people who satisfy themselves through homosexuality, masturbation or in .some other unnatural ways

It may be found interesting to know that in cultured America the Association of the

Homosexuals has launched a campaign. It stages public demonstrations and has .succeeded in winning the support even of some members of the congress

During my travels in America one day I saw a big demonstration on the roads there. The same day the American Television telecast the news of similar demonstrations in other states and towns. The demonstrators were crying: "We are human beings, and ".want to satisfy our needs this way

In fact this way of satisfaction is against the divine norms of history, the violation of which is a culpable offence. The only thing is that in such cases history takes a lenient view to give a chance to the defaulters to realize their mistake and change their ways. If they do not do that and persist in their error, they should expect nothing but a .punishment like one meted out to the people of Prophet Lut (Lot). That is a reality

In the field of human affairs other examples also may be cited. For example, by their nature man and woman have separate fields of activity. The woman is naturally inclined to tender and emotional jobs. She likes to show her skill in tenderness and the elegance of human nature. We may entrust these feminine jobs to man, who is a .symbol of toughness and strength, and entrust man's jobs to woman

This is quite practical and apparently there is no difficulty. But such an arrangement is not lasting. For a week it can be arranged that all men stay

at home, feed the children with bottle, wash and clean them and perform other .domestic chores, and in exchange women do the hard jobs

This arrangement is possible. But it would look like giving the job of the man of one trade to the man of another trade in an under-construction building. For example we give the job of a carpenter to a brazier, the job of a mason to a cabinetmaker, and the .job of a cabinetmaker to a blacksmith, or ask a veterinarian to act as a civil engineer

All these people can work and erect a building, but such a building will not last long. The rain and the wind will soon pull it down. Similarly if a society goes against the .norms of history, it will disintegrate very quickly

At the most the word `quick' has a special reckoning in the terminology of the norms of history. Here the quickness is relative. It is this case to which the following verse :applies

(A day with Allah is as a thousand years of what you reckon. (Surah al-Hajj, ۲۲:۴۷

Quickness being relative, for the purpose of changes in history, one day according to the Qur'an is equal to ۱۰۰۰ years. Hence quickness does not mean what we understand by it ordinarily. That the above verse is related to the norms of history is :shown by the words with which it begins. The beginning words are

(They ask you to hasten the punishment." . (Surah al-Hajj, ۲۲:۴۷"

The pagans of Makkah were

saying: "If it is true that those who fight against the Prophets are destined to be defeated and punished soon, where is that defeat and when will we be punished? We ".are ready to receive the punishment

The Qur'an says that those who violate the norms of history are bound to be punished but in due course. The quickness of the punishment is relative. Anyhow, they should .rest assured that the punishment will come soon

:We have another verse

The angels and the spirit will ascend to Him in a Day whereof the span is fifty (thousand years. (Surah al-Ma'arij, ۷۰:۳

:At the end of this verse the Qur'an says

.That day the sky will become like molten copper

These words show that this verse relates to the Day of Resurrection, because only on that day the sky will be like molten copper. No such thing will ever take place in this world. Hence it is evident that the previous verse relates to this world and mentions .the norms of history

The above point having been made clear, we may now say that religion is also one of .the norms of history

This point may be elaborated in the light of the Surah al-Baqarah, ۲:۳۰, which .stipulates the vicegerency of man on the earth

;In every society there exist three elements: (i) Human element, that is men

;ii) Natural element termed by the Qur'an the earth)

.iii) The bond which exists between man and the natural element)

The first two elements are constant and invariable. There

can be no place where man may exist but he should have no contact with his environment that is other men and nature. Nor can we imagine nature anywhere in human history not linked with man. Hence man and nature are two constant elements in all societies. The important point to be studied is the nature of the link between .these two

If we analyse this link from the viewpoint of vicegerency as mentioned in the Qur'an, :we find that this proposition has four sides as under

i) The authority appointing the vicegerent, that is Allah, who appointed man His) .vicegerent on the earth

.ii) The vicegerent, that is man)

iii) The things to administer which the vicegerent has been appointed. They are two) .things: man and nature. Thus there are four sides of this case

When we consider the question of vicegerency, we find that man has been made responsible for other men and nature. On the whole he holds responsibility in respect of everything in this world. His responsibility is so vast that Imam Ali has said: "You are "".responsible for all places and animals

The fourth element, Allah has not been added to the list merely to enhance the number. It is He who has allotted this responsibility to man. Anybody who disregards this link, is liable to become arrogant and to consider himself the absolute master of :everything on which he can lay his hand. The Qur'an itself says

Surely man is rebellious when he thinks that he is independent. (Surah

(al-Alaq, ۹۶:۶-۷

If man does not believe in Allah his relation to the world becomes based on exploitation and despotism. Such a man enslaves his fellow-beings and exploits them .for his own gain. He imposes his absolute authority on lands and property

His self-conceit makes him oblivious of himself. So long as his relation to his environment is merely three-sided, that is confined to other men and nature, he is selfish, but the whole situation changes as soon as he realizes that he holds a trust .and works on behalf of the Lord of this world

You can clearly see the difference between a three-sided and a four-sided relationship, if you see the films of American inhuman treatment of the red Indians and the blacks and the films of the American crimes in other countries like Vietnam etc. All this commotion, sense of irresponsibility, and the feelings of conceit, lust and .greed are due to man's being three-dimentional

:We have another verse which covers the same point from another angle

We offered the trust to the heavens, the earth and the hills, but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it. And man assumed it. Surely he is unjust and a fool. ((Surah al-Ahzab, ۳۳:۷۲

It must be understood that here the assumption of a trust does not mean the assumption of any duty because at no time man was in a position to do that or had a choice of accepting or not accepting such a responsibility. Then what is

the nature of this trust which Allah places on us? We are rational beings, still we did not know whether we should or should not accept this trust. Then what to say of ?those which had not even the capacity of understanding

Are the hills able to understand anything? Do the heavens and the earth understand? It was not an offer of any duty that could be accepted by one and refused by another. Here the acceptance of a responsibility is a subtle and beautiful way of saying that .religion is ingrained in man's nature, who is instinctively inclined to seek it

Man by nature accepts the existence of Allah. He is automatically drawn towards Him. The heavens, the earth and the hills have no such natural tendency. They do not have .the capacity of submitting to Allah's commands and obeying them

In another verse in which the true state of man's nature has been mentioned, the Qur'an refers to this natural tendency of man from the angle that it has been granted .to him by Allah

Set your face towards religion as an upright man and follow the true state of nature in (which Allah has created man. (Surah al-Rum, ۳۰:۳۰

In the above quoted verse of the Surah al-Ahzab the Qur'an refers to this very quality of man from the angle that man has accepted it. This acceptance had been done by man's nature. Religion is a divine trust and it is in the making of man. But it is that type of

.trend of his which can temporarily be disregarded

Religion is not like fire which must always burn, its burning and heating qualities being such that they can never be separated from it. Religion is also not like water which always boils at a particular degree of heat. It is one of those norms which can be disregarded at will and can even be temporarily suppressed and curbed.

In this respect it can be compared to sexual drive. If a man does not go the natural way, he can adopt some other course to satisfy himself. Similarly a woman instead of doing what nature has prescribed for her, may take up some masculine jobs. But it must be remembered that going against nature always has dire consequence.

The same is true of religion, and evil are the results of opposing it. It is only his bad luck if any man is hostile to religion in contravention of his own natural tendencies. Surely man is unjust and a fool.

He is unjust to himself if he tramples upon religion, and it does not give a free hand to his true nature and does not submit to the injunctions of Allah. In such a case the subsequent part of the Qur'anic verse which says:

"But most men know not",

will apply to him.

Many people do not know that the observance of religion has vital social importance for them. They contravene religion and then say: "If it is true that religion is a norm of history,

how is it that people can safely afford to contravene it?" We say that they cannot afford to contravene it. The defaulters have only a short respite and they will soon see .'the consequences. Of course `soon' in this context means historical 'soon

In fact, man is surely unjust and a fool. He has consented to bear the `trust' and made it a part of his nature, but in actual practice he does wrong to himself and out of ignorance goes against his own nature. We will later discuss how religion makes its way to society and how the outside influences affect man's environment. For the .present we put off the discussion of man and nature

Now we revert to our main subject. As we have pointed out earlier the Qur'an indicates that religion is one of the most important norms of history. The discovery that religion is a norm and not merely a divine idea is very significant and requires that this question should be studied from scientific point of view, for many vital questions are linked with this question. It is to be noted that the years, days and hours of the norms of history are relative and longer than those according to which we reckon the .ordinary events

We earlier inferred this point from the Qur'an. Nevertheless we still have to study it as a scientific law. The discovery that religion plays a significant role as a norm of history, makes it necessary that we cast a glance on

the question of man's vicegerency of Allah and on the elements which constitute this .vicegerency

In this connection all that is derived from the Qur'an is that Allah has appointed man .His vicegerent in respect of men and nature

In this relationship there are four sides or four elements, each one of which should be .considered separately

The first side is man, the second is Allah, the third is man's relation with nature and the fourth is man's relation with his fellow beings. If we study the two constant elements - man and nature and place man in the perspective of history, we find that the man who makes history is different from the man who is a causative dimension of .his past

There are many factors, responsible for man's coming to this world and his being placed under the existing conditions, but he must have some other factors in his mind to induce him to go after an objective and ultimately become a future-maker. What type of man is the future-making man? We assert that man makes history with his own hands. Does history exist in a material form? Is it a thing which man can hold in .his hands? Nothing of the sort

All that man can have is a mental conception of future followed by a mental determination and a will not executed so far. That is why as far as the movement of history is concerned, we adjudge all the concrete questions and the questions of the past, on

.the basis of the general law of causation

But we have no basis for all that is concerned with the future or with our aims and objects, except a mental conception and subsequently a mental determination or a state of preparedness to make a future move. It is this state which is called 'will'. The :whole structure of society is built on two pillars

i) man's mental conception and)

.ii) his will and determination to give a concrete shape to his ideas)

It is evident that whatever takes place in society, is a superstructure based on man's thinking and his intentions. That is why the Qur'an believes that there exists a close relationship between this infrastructure and the superstructure of society built on this infrastructure. When we closely study the following verse, we find that in it there is a :direct reference to these sections of the structure of society

Surely Allah does not change the condition of a people, until they change that which is .in their hearts

It means that the superstructure of society can be changed only if its infrastructure is changed. To bring about a change in society, it is necessary to change its basic thinking and the will. If its way of thinking is changed, society will automatically be .changed. In this connection there is one more essential condition

Every action must be a reflection of its social thinking. When an idea creates a wave in society and that wave becomes strong enough to change its social thinking, the

.will of society is also changed

As a result, a sequence of outer developments appears in society. But all the developments must be the result of a basic and infrastructural change. Otherwise they are fake and dangerous for society. That is why Islam emphasizes that Jihad (the .holy war) conducted by the Muslims is only a minor jihad

The major and genuine jihad is that which is waged inside man himself. If the inner thinking and the outer action are not in harmony with each other, the correct name of this state is hypocrisy. A hypocrite is known by the disagreement of his thinking and :doing. Describing the hypocrites the Qur'an says

There is such a man whose views on this worldly life please you. He even calls on Allah to vouch for that which is in his heart. Yet he is the deadliest of your opponents. (Surah (al-Baqarah, ۲:۲۰۵

What a hypocrite says is apparently very pleasing, but he is still a hypocrite because :what he harbours in his heart is not in consonance with what he says

No sooner he leaves you than he tries to make mischief in the land, destroying crops (and cattle. (Surah al-Baqarah, ۲:۲۰۵

If a man's actions do not agree with his thoughts and his intentions, he is a hypocrite and a mischief-maker. He is likely to cause devastation and subversion. It is our duty to pave the way for the forward march of history. The wheels of history move in the right direction when their

.movement is inspired by the ideals of the right-thinking men

Actually it is big ideals which move everyone along a particular line, feed the small movements and boost the wavering wills. We find our ideals in the light of our outlook on the most important questions of our life. These ideals become a motivating force and make the things moving. Only then we are able to make some contribution to the .development of society

An ideal is a thing which man always keeps in his view, by which he is guided and to which he is absolutely devoted in his life. He continues to advance along the line determined by his ideal. It may be called his aspiration and ideology also. It is man's motivating force. Sometimes it so happens that a licentious man makes his lewdness his ideal. The religion also can be the ideal of some people. That is why the Qur'an :says

(Have you seen him who has chosen for his god his own lust? (Surah al-Furqan, ۲۵:۴۳

There are people who are inspired and motivated by their base desires. Their only .ideal is their lust

The main ideals of men can be studied under three different headings. The first category of the ideals is that which is connected with the existing conditions. Many people get so absorbed in the questions of daily life that they remain content with the .existing conditions and are motivated by them only throughout their life

If we look for the reasons why they are

content with the status quo and do not find any attraction in working for the future, .we will find that there are two reasons of that: The first is their lethargy

Being easy-going they do not realize the need of moving towards future. They are interested only in passing their life somehow or other and do not want to take any .trouble or to exert any pressure on their mind

To this category belong those who adhere to what their forefathers did. In the Qur'an .so many verses refer to these people. For example take this verse

(They say: Enough for us is that wherein we found our fathers. (Surah al-Ma'idah, ۵:۱۰۴

These were the people who accused the Prophets of misguiding them and diverting :them from their forefathers' way of life

We found our fathers following a religion and we are following their footprints. (Surah (al-Zukhruf, ۴۳:۲۴

They forget that following the footprints of forefathers is not a goal nor an ideal which could ensure their future. The Qur'an has another expression for this attitude. It describes it as sticking to the earth, that is having the materialistic tendency of satisfying one's base desires, adhering to the existing conditions and passing a lazy .life

This tendency has eroded so many people from within and prevented them from moving forward. Because of their lethargy they have failed to join the caravan of advancement. These people, to ensure the satisfaction of their base desires, stick to the ways of their forefathers. This is the

.internal reason

Besides that, there is an external reason also, which compels some people to regard the existing conditions, as their ideal, if the status quo could be described so. This reason is the force of authority exercised by the Pharaohs (tyrants) of the time. Pharaohs were particular persons, but we can use this word in its derived general .sense

All over history the pharaohs have followed the same pattern. They have always demanded that complete obedience and total submission to them only should be the ideal of everybody under their control. The tyrants want the existing situation to be accepted by the people as their ideal. The Qur'an says that Pharaoh (Fir'awn) asked Prophet Musa how he could think of any god other than him when he had all that could .be expected of a god

Fir`awn said: `O Chiefs, I do not know that you have a god other than me'. (Surah al-Qasas, ۲۸:۳۸)

:The pharaohs imposed their views on others

I do but show you what I think and I do but guide you to a wise policy. (Surah al Mo'min, ۴۰:۲۹)

The tyrants neither want the people to think independently, nor do they allow them to have their own way. People can get rid of the tyrants if they think for themselves and .do not blindly follow those who like Fir'awn claim that whatever they say is right

Islam exhorts people to shatter the limitations imposed on them and find their own way. A part of this verse

:refers to the point under discussion

Give good tidings to My bondmen, who hear advice and follow the best thereof. ((Surah az-Zumar, ۳۹:۱۷-۱۸

:The verse ۱۷ of Surah az-Zumar begins with these words

For those who refrain from adoring the tyrants and turn to Allah in repentance, for .them there are good tidings

Obviously unqualified obedience is a sort of adoration. The Qur'an says that there are good tidings for those who keep away from the tyrants, fight against them and turn to Allah. Then Qur'an continues to say that these are the people who do not follow the orders of anybody blindly, weigh carefully what they are told and choose their ideal themselves. Thus the first category of the ideals is that which makes people content .with the existing state of affairs

There are two factors which prevent them from thinking of any other ideal. One is internal and the other is external. Both these factors are dangerous for humanity. It is significant that gradually these ideals are given a religious turn and clothed with a sort of sanctity. The devotion shown to ancestors and forefathers becomes comparable to .divine worship

According to the Qur'an these things have no reality. They do not bring about any factors of homogeneity in society. At the most they create some future hopes and expectations, but when these hopes do not materialize, people become still more absorbed in the existing conditions and make them their ideal. Then all hopes of the .homogeneity of society are lost

Everybody's attention is concentrated on meeting his own personal and family needs and securing bread, butter, shelter etc. As a result, although the members of society may have a semblance of unity, their actual condition is represented by the verse :which says

Their adversity among themselves is very great. You think them as a whole, whereas (their hearts are diverse. (Surah al-Hashr, ۵۹:۱۴

People may belong to one formation, yet they have no homogeneity. In their ideals nothing being common to the whole community, each individual goes after his own personal interest. When a nation falls to such a low ebb, the past experience shows, that there are three ways how the things may develop. In fact, there are some people who have some half-way ideals, but after having achieved them they forget about .their future and become contented with the existing state of affairs

The three ways of development hinted above are predictable. The situation becomes most serious when a nation having no ideal is subjected to a military attack from outside. In this situation everybody thinks of saving his own life and property only. Such a nation cannot forge unity to be able to withstand the foreign forces and hence .its resistance is broken soon

In our history we have experienced the results of being interested in transitory and momentary questions. The Mongol invasion of Iran is an event which still requires some investigation. At the time of this invasion people's interest in material questions and day to day life had

diverted the attention of society from its real ideal. Chaos and disunity were the order .of the day

As society had no conception of an earnest and historical action, it was completely shattered by the Mongol invasion. In the circumstances prevalent at that time it was but natural that a foreign power should come and destroy the crumbling and moth-.eaten nation

The second development which may take place when a nation does not have an ideal of its own, is that it may pick up some imported ideal. Nowadays many nations are .facing this situation

We saw a glaring example of this situation in our country when the Persian Kings, Raza and Muhammad Raza tried to impose on us the Western culture as if we were a nation which had nothing of our own and had to beg for Western ideas. Ataturk did .the same in Turkey. Other instances can be seen in various other countries

The third possible development is that a nation should find out its real ideal and should start a movement to reconstruct itself. This was the case with us when we launched our revolutionary movement in the years preceding ۱۹۶۳. This movement gained strength day by day till we succeeded in bringing about a revolution; and this is the .third category of the ideals. We will study it further at its appropriate place

If we make a thorough study of the second category of the ideals we may say that .this category does not provide any absolute ideal

Anyhow, some of the ideals of this category may be regarded as a stage which must .be passed

We must not stop at the stage of these ideals. They may be a thing which may be desirable for a nation, but not enough in itself, neither horizontally nor vertically. In other words it must develop further with the passage of time. For example, let us take freedom. It is a good ideal. It is required. But the question is whether it is a content or .only a form which we must pass to reach the content

There was a time when Europe was under the pressure of the Church, which had monopolized knowledge and had thereby placed restrictions on the common man. People were groaning under the yoke of the feudalists. Trade, industry and other .affairs of life were controlled by a cruel and oppressive aristocracy

At that time the most important question for the people of Europe was that of freedom. They thought if they got freedom, they would obtain all that they desired. They made freedom their ideal. But freedom is only the first step towards making a historical move. It is not a thing with which one should become content. Other steps .must follow the first step

One must see what is that for which freedom is required. We want freedom to go to bazaar to be able to purchase something. If we have a freedom to move, we must know what for we want to move. If

we get free, but do not know what to do with our freedom, we will be like a boat .aimlessly released in the middle of a sea

Freedom is very important for marching towards the main ideal, but it is extremely dangerous to regard it as the goal of life. Especially with the present technical and industrial progress it may culminate in playing with atomic weapons and drawing the world to bloodshed and ruin. Means of devastation in the hands of a free but irresponsible man are just like matches, cotton, gunpowder and other incendiary .material in the hands of the children playing with them

From vertical point of view, that is from long term point of view a half-way ideal is relatively good, but it is of no use if further progress is not made towards the absolute ideal. A halfway ideal is fit to be a stage and a means only. Another example of this .sort of an ideal is the unit formed by family members

Several families make a tribe; several tribes make a clan; a number of clans make a community and then several communities make a nation. Instead of extending our outlook to the world level, we often make our family our ideal and make every sacrifice to safeguard its interests. This is another example of giving undue :importance to a relative ideal. The Qur'an says

As for those who disbelieve, their deeds are as a mirage in a desert. The thirsty one supposes it to

be water till he comes to it and finds it nothing, and instead finds with him Allah, who (pays him his due. (Surah al-Nur, ۲۴:۳۹

The deeds of those who have no proper goal and have not a divine outlook are like a mirage. They run after what has no real existence. They find Allah before them .because Allah is everywhere. Wherever one goes Allah is there

When the Qur'an says He finds Allah before him, it means that Allah is at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of everything. When those who have not a divine outlook reach the end of their journey towards their ideal, they find no trace of .it

On the other hand, they find Allah everywhere. All their ideals being half-way ideals, they must move forward from the stage of these ideals. Otherwise they will again and again come across the same boring ideals which cause society to degenerate and .decompose it from within

In short the declining societies find themselves facing one of the four situations. In one of the situations they may have some relative ideal. The Qur'an admits that a society having a relative ideal may obtain some positive results as far as its material :life is concerned. The Qur'an says

Whoever desires this worldly gain, We hasten for him in this world that We will and for (whom We please. (Surah Bani Isra'il, ۱۷:۱۸

.It is a different thing that in the next world he may have to face difficulties

:As for those who seek next worldly gain, the Qur'an says

And whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it with the effort necessary, being (a believer; for such their effort finds favour with their Lord. (Surah an-Nisa, ۴:۱۹

That means that those who have an eye to the more distant horizon, their wish is also fulfilled. The next verse makes it clear that both these groups are helped in achieving .their respective objects

Each do we supply, both these and those, from the bounty of your Lord. And the (bounty of your Lord can never be blocked. (Surah Bani Isra'il, ۱۷:۱۹-۲۰

Those who have only a relative ideal, work to achieve it. That is the first stage. After they have achieved their objective, the second stage comes, which is a stage of pause. But as man cannot remain without an ideal for long at the third stage they choose some prominent personalities from among them as their ideal. That is why the :Qur'an says

They say: Our Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and elders, and they misled us from the (way. (Surah al-Ahzab, ۳۳:۶۷

They follow their chiefs, because they had reached the stage of pause. It is at this stage that man begins to adore other human beings, for he cannot sit idle and must .have something or someone as his ideal

As a result, these chiefs and elders form an aristocratic class and begin to lead a luxurious life. To maintain their position thus acquired, these luxurious people oppose every

:reform. The Qur'an says

We never sent a warner before you (Holy Prophet) to any township, but its luxurious (ones said . . .. , (Surah al-Zukhruf, ۴۳:۲۳

Whenever a Prophet comes, he is first of all opposed by this very wealthy class, the members of which are held in respect and awe by those, who having been cut off .from their ideal, cannot think of anything except maintaining the existing position

Once having gained power, the luxurious and oppressive class never agrees to loosen its grip on society. Then the fourth stage comes when this class rides so roughshod over society that it deprives the common people of all the fruits of their civilization and .seizes and destroys their resources

We find many such instances in the past and the contemporary history. Hitler and his German Nazis destroyed the fruits of civilization amassed by so many countries over long periods through all kinds of trickery. When wealthy classes come into existence, side by side with them there appear those who ultimately annihilate them. The Qur'an :says

And similarly We have allowed in every town its ringleaders to intrigue therein, but (they intrigue against themselves only. (Surah al-An'am, ۶:۱۲۳

They intrigue to create disorder which culminates in their own destruction and the destruction of their civilization. Though none of the ideals so far mentioned by us was a true ideal, yet it is a fact that society regards each of them as a religion. Stalinism is .a religion. Nazism is a religion

.Despotism and even licentiousness are religions

As we have already said, one of the ideals is the existing state of affairs. It is accepted as such either because of laziness or as the result of pressure by some oppressive force. Another ideal is some half-way movement. This ideal also in the long run leads .to the same results as the first one

In the wake of it society passes through various vicissitudes and is ultimately annihilated. As such we must find out some other ideal which may be consistent with man's forward-looking nature. As he can satisfy this yearning of his by directing his .attention to Allah, we propose Allah as the third ideal

There are two advantages of our proposal. The first advantage is quantitative, for by following our suggestion man can incessantly move forward towards his infinite goal. His movement is not stopped at any stage, nor does he reach an impasse. There is no limit to his achievement. Society can never come to a stand-still. Way is always open .for society to move forward

From this point of view this advantage is quantitative. We have seen that in the case of all other ideals man's progress comes to an end soon and as a result, society begins to decay. Therefore a continuous and constructive movement of society towards .Allah is the only natural alternative

The other advantage of our proposal is qualitative. By following our suggestion man can find a way to resolve the inner contradiction existing in

him. First let us see what this contradiction is. We can study this question in the light of .independent views as well as from the viewpoint of the Qur'an

It is gathered from the Qur'an that man has two kinds of tendencies. He has some material tendencies which include both his physical and mental needs and drives. He is naturally inclined towards ensuring his self-interests. He strongly desires to be rich and feels compelled to satisfy his sexual and other biological needs. He wants to live in .comfort and luxury

At the same time man has a different kind of urge also. Having been made of clay, he :has material tendencies, but has a flicker of divine spirit also in him. Allah says

"I breathed in him of My spirit".(Sura al-Hijr, ۱۵:۲۹)

As a result man has two conflicting kinds of tendencies. There is a conflict between truth and falsehood, between justice and injustice, between good and evil and between right and wrong. This is an inner problem of man. Social studies do not provide any solution of this problem. They only confirm its existence. Man is always in a fix which way he should go. He appears to have no means to resolve this .contradiction

Hence there must be an outside force which may pull him to one of the two conflicting sides. By nature we know the necessity of being pulled to that side which represents justice and virtue. Allah being the source of the pull, evidently we must

have Him as an ideal. If societies organize themselves in such a way that they proceed toward Him, two great reforms will simultaneously take place.

First, society will be reformed and secondly, man himself will change for the better. Other ideals cannot do this, because they cannot instil in man a sense of responsibility. Man regards other ideals either as his equal or an existence below himself. Allah is far above man. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the whole world. There is nothing like Him. He is not of the same category as man. Man cannot oppose Him, nor can he be His rival. Allah is Omniscient, All-hearing and All seeing. He is Just, He keeps an account of everything and recompenses for evil and for good. In Allah man can find all those forces which can induce an individual or a society to do a thing.

As a result Allah's religion is the most important factor which can persuade a society to reform itself. In this connection it is necessary to explain how it is possible that Allah has a role in connection with human societies which on the one hand are concerned with such affairs as technical, industrial, agricultural and those connected with animal breeding, and on the other with human relations.

Before giving our explanation in this respect, let us see what the proponents of dialectical and historical materialism, who bore us with their lectures on philosophy of history, have to say on this subject. These

people who wish to reduce man to animal, insist that man should have no connection with Allah. They say that religion is the opium of the nations. This statement is quite appropriate in respect of the religions we mentioned above - the religions which make a god of the existing state of affairs and deify their leaders, the religions which regard .the material condition of their family or half-way independence as their ideal

No doubt these things have a narcotic effect and are the opium of the nations. We want man to get rid of these narcotics, but we do not want to make him the victim of a more dangerous opium. If you think of liberating man totally from religion, to what ?else do you want to hand him over for his future

While entertaining the reality of this divine ideal, we have to accept the five fundamental principles of Islam on which the ideality of Allah is based. These principles are: Monotheism, and Prophethood, which forms a link between Allah and humanity, and the Ummah, which is the external crystallization of Prophethood, the .Hereafter, which serves as an incentive to human efforts and lastly Divine Justice

Should we try to elaborate these principles, we will have to go into the relation of religion to society and history and will have to discuss historical norms. Hence we skip over the ideological and intellectual aspects of the question and take up the theme of .society

,If society has a link with Allah

the two-fold relationship which exists in every society works better. There are two constant elements in every society, man and nature. Man's relation with these two is important, that is man's relation with his fellow human beings and his relation with nature. We want to study this relationship from the point of view of religion and would like to see what should be done if we want to improve the relation between man and .man

Here Marx comes with his analysis of the social questions. He says that society is always divided into a privileged class and an under-privileged class. In order to get rid of its deprivations that under-privileged class has always been engaged in a constant class war over all periods of history. The struggle between these two classes will continue till all class disparities vanish and an ideal classless society comes into existence. This should be regarded as an inexorable process and a historical .inevitability

He says that all revolutionary activities that he wants to be conducted are meant only to push forward this historical movement, though the process will inevitably continue even otherwise. If we involve ourselves with the discussion of this controversial .theory, we are afraid that our own programme and purpose will be left incomplete

Hence we overlook the criticism which has been levelled against this faulty theory. For example it is asked why this theory of revolutionary process has failed in the case of industrialized countries such as the U.S.A., Britain, France and

?Germany

Why do we see that in certain countries the rich and the poor classes have come close to each other and instead of fighting against each other, work together without any mutual conflict at all. In the U.S.A. the workers and the employers cooperate with each other. In this case what happened to the principle of contradiction and conflict? Is this class contradiction true in the case of certain selected peoples only or is there a ?contradiction between the material prosperity of some and the poverty of others

If the theory of class conflict is really valid, this conflict should be universal irrespective of the time and place. But we see that the Marxists themselves admit that .the divergent conditions prevailing in each country make a lot of difference

Incidentally it may be remarked that there appears to be an ominous concord between the American workers and the American employers that America should seize the resources of the countries under its influence and divide them between its own workers and employers. The whole case appears to be that of cocks making free .with horse's corn

All have eyes on oil of the Middle East, diamonds of Tanzania, cotton of Egypt, and tobacco and wine of Algeria. There are other sectors also where the American workers and employers have an agreement. As we cannot accept the basis of .contradiction pointed out by Marx, we must find out another basis of it

Despite all his originality, intelligence and study of history Marx's thinking is

limited. The flight of his thinking could reach only a minor aspect of the real contradiction. He discovered that human relations centre round a conflict between the strong and the weak. The strong may derive his strength from his wealth, his post or any other sphere of power and influence. Even science is an evil which may provide .someone with strength to trample upon the weak. It is not a question of capital only

In fact the root of this phenomenon goes much deeper. Hence we must find out the real root-cause of the contradiction and conflict prevailing in human society. The main question is whether man should have a materialistic tendency or should tend towards the flash of divine light. As this is a question of man's inner feeling, the contradiction can be resolved only when all societies and men follow that course which man's .vicegerency of Allah demands

As we know, Allah has placed every thing of the world at the disposal of man as a trust. All problems are automatically solved, when man follows that course. We see that a man who recognizes Allah and follows the course prescribed by Him is compassionate and kind-hearted. He shows respect to his fellow human beings and .does not regard them as tools for the satisfaction of his own desires

As far as class war is concerned, it is to be noted that there are cases when both the classes of a nation unite together to crush another nation. Therefore

class war does not have a root in society all over history, nor are the ups and downs in the history of societies always determined by economic and material questions.

The problem is more deep-rooted. Man has two contradictory elements in his nature. The question is to which side he should incline. Within him man has no force to give a definite turn to one of his conflicting tendencies.

Therefore there must be an outside force to direct him, and that force can be nothing except his turning and leaning towards Allah. This is the position as far as the relation between man and man are concerned. In fact our problem is two-fold: man's relation with other men and man's relation with nature.

A link with Allah and religion solves both these problems. As for man's relation with other men, the problem is that man while dealing with others turns to selfishness and ignores the interests of others. This not only creates conflict of interests, but is also contrary to man's natural inclination towards Allah. The solution of this problem lies in our belief in Allah and religion.

The second problem is how to subdue the ruthless and inflexible nature and bring it under our control so that we may obtain from it all that we need in life. This problem can be solved if we work with nature more and more.

Thus we will get the experience necessary to bring nature under our control. In fact this is a two-way process. The

more we work with nature, the better we control it and the more we control it, the more experience we gain and consequently new avenues are opened to us.

But the problem is that when man begins to control nature and becomes capable to make a better use of it, he enslaves others and his power of exploitation increases. We had no power of exerting pressure on others when we depended on hunting for our livelihood and could defend ourselves only with wooden and stone weapons.

But with the availability of huge industrial outfits and modernized means of agriculture, man acquires power of exploiting other fellow beings also. This is affirmed by the Qur'an when it says:

(Surely man is rebellious when he thinks that he is independent. (Surah al-`Alaq, ۹۶:۶-۷)

When man could cultivate only his own land and could produce only as much food as was barely enough for himself, he could not think of seizing the land of others. At that time he scarcely had any means to exploit others. But today he has acquired enough power of exploitation.

Now what is to be done to ensure that man subdues nature, gets maximum benefit out of it and at the same time does not exploit his fellow beings? In our opinion the solution of this problem lies in the relation between work and experience. The more man exerts himself, the more experience he gains. The only condition is that he must not sever his relation with Allah.

He must

look at all natural resources as a divine trust, at himself as the vicegerent of Allah and at other human beings as his brethren. If he does so, surely prosperity will grow many fold and the blessings of Allah will shower from the heaven and the earth. There will be no shortage of anything for human society. There is another way of saying the same thing. If there is a fair distribution, the production is bound to go up to the .required level

This is a belief which has its roots in the Qur'an. There are many verses which lay stress on it. This view is also supported by historical norms. As for the Qur'an we may :quote the following Qur'anic verse for example

If they continue to tread the right path, We shall give them to drink of water in (abundance. (Surah al-Jinn, ۷۲:۱۶

:The following verse is clearer in its import

If the people of the townships had believed and kept from evil, surely We should have opened for them blessings from the sky and from the earth. But they disbelieved, and (so we seized them on account of what they used to earn. (Surah al-A'raf, ۷:۹۶

Of course this view can be accepted only by those who have faith in the Qur'an. But we can observe the applicability of this formula in our everyday life. If in a society justice, virtue and piety prevail; the factors which unify it become strong. Its homogeneity which is necessary to run the colossal

wheels of industry and agriculture is galvanized. Because of its unity and cohesion .such a society can overcome all its difficulties and never faces any disruption

Societies not having this unifying force are liable to decay and disintegrate. The authorities which subjugate these societies, themselves create disunity and discord. One may think that they are civilized and have unity and solidarity, but as a rule their .solidarity is artificial. They are split at the places where human solidarity is required

It is interesting to note that such words as arrogant, tyrant and oppressor which we have used, we have derived from the story of Fir'awn in the Qur'an. Some people may think that the Qur'an recounts historical stories such as the story of Fir'awn and .Prophet Musa, merely to narrate history. Now we can say that this notion is wrong

The Qur'an wants to point out that the factors of disruption and annihilation are inherent in despotic societies. We can predict their fate. On the other hand a divine .society is blessed with the quality of homogeneity

Surely this community of yours is one community, and ۱ am your Lord, so worship Me. ((Surah al-Anbiya, ۲۱:۹۲

Allah says that He has made the Muslims one single formation. Hence it is their duty to march forward and open new avenues. The position of the pharonic society is, on the other hand, quite different. The dissensions of the members of this society inevitably split them into six classes. We would name the first one the

despised class. This class depends on the despots and pharaohs and cooperates with :them. In respect of them the Qur'an says

When the wrongdoers are brought before their Lord, Those who were despised (on the earth) say to those who were arrogant: But for you, we should have been (believers. (Surah as-Saba, ۳۴:۳۱

This verse depicts the scene of the Doomsday. On that day some of the wrongdoers will be blaming some others. The verse makes it clear that even all those who belonged to the despised and depressed class were not virtuous. Some of them also were wrongdoers. Allah says when the wrongdoers will be brought before Him, some of them will be belonging to the despised class and they will have a verbal contest .with the arrogant

The second class consists of the pharaohs' favourites and their advisers. They encourage and guide the pharaohs. So to say they are often more Romans than the .Romans themselves

:The Qur'an says

The chiefs of Pharaoh's people said: `Will you allow Musa and his people to make (mischief in the land?' (Sarah al-A'raf, ۷:۱۲۷

These Pharaoh's favourites were instigating him and saying: We wonder why do you leave Musa and his people alone. They will be making mischief and will not accept your godship. These chiefs provoked Fir'awn to say that he would soon kill the sons of .the Israelites and enslave their womenfolk

.Thus the second class comprises the Pharaohs' favourites and advisers

The third class consists of those who have no goal or ideal. This

class includes mostly the illiterate, backward and poor people, who are always dragged from one side to another. According to the Qur'an they will say on the :Doomsday

Our Lord, indeed we obeyed our chiefs and elders and it is they who misled us from (the way. (Sarah al-Ahzab, ۳۳:۶۷

It may be pointed out that these illiterate and barefooted people have a remarkable role in society. It is our duty to dissuade them from following their wicked chiefs and .to guide them to the virtuous people. Imam Ali has mentioned this group

He classifies the people into three categories: the divines, those who receive education for their salvation and the stupid having no goal. The last ones are ready to .follow anything false which may come across them

There is a reference in the Qur'an to those who follow the divines. It mentions the virtuous companions of the Holy Prophet and then adds: and those who followed them in earnestness. (In Islamic jurisprudence the followers of the divines are called .(muqallids - followers of a mujtahid

It is our duty to persuade the great masses of the people to adhere to their juristic authority instead of going after false ideals or having no goal at all, so that they may be included among those who follow them in earnestness or in the words of Imam Ali among those who "receive education for the sake of salvation". In short these people .form a large section of society

In a despotic society a fourth

class is also found. This class comprises the people who fully understand the unjust and tyrannical nature of the policies pursued by their rulers, but they keep quiet in :respect of these policies. Referring to them the Qur'an says

The angels take them when they are unjust to themselves. The angels ask them: (Where were you? They say: We were suppressed in the land. (Surah an Nisa', ۴:۹۷

They mean to say that they were controlled by the despots and were not free to take a decision. But the fact is that it is not permissible to remain quiet in such a situation. :The Qur'an quotes the angels as saying to them

"?Was not the land of Allah vast"

Why could they not emigrate to a safe place and save themselves from the tyrants? Thus under a tyrannical and despotic government there exists a fourth category comprising those people who keep quiet and make no move. Even if they do not cooperate with injustice, they live in a despotic atmosphere and take no action to .change the situation

The fifth class consists of a small number of people who alienate themselves from society. They actually have no right to keep themselves in seclusion. Society requires men who work to reconstruct it, not those who renounce it. Allah reproached Prophet Yunus (Jonah) when he abandoned his society and told him that he must have stayed .with his people. Consequently Prophet Yunus turned to Allah in repentance

:The Qur'an says

Many of the Jewish rabbis and

the Christian monks devour the wealth of the people and turn them away from the (way of Allah. (Surah Tawbah, ۹:۳۴

Nowadays there are people who say that religious scholars have no right to interfere in politics, for religion and politics are two separate things. Those who have this logic, ,in the words of the Qur'an

".debar the people from the way of Allah"

To the sixth class belong those who despite being underprivileged and suppressed do their best to change the prevailing conditions. In this connection there exists a divine law and a historical norm which we would have discussed in detail if the space .allowed

Anyhow, according to this law if the whole underprivileged and down-trodden class living under a corrupt system rises against it, it always gains victory. Today this is an important question of our present world. The subjugated nations making struggle for their liberation must know that this historical norm materializes invariably. The Qur'an :says

We desire to show favour to those who are oppressed in the earth and to make them (leaders and the heirs. (Surah al-Qasas, ۲۸:۵

This verse refers to the same rule. The story of Prophet Musa and Fir'awn also proves .its truth

".When We delivered you from Pharaoh's folk"

But if no effective resistances made gradually the pharaohs and tyrants succeed in crushing and destroying the social forces by creating dissensions among them. When social forces have been disintegrated, the industrial and scientific forces are not of much avail or at least cannot

.produce the desired results

Even if any results are produced they do not benefit the common people and do not bring prosperity to them in a disintegrated society. As a result society is hit by disorder ?and chaos. In these circumstances how can society be reformed

It can be reformed only when all people have trust in Allah, believe in a hidden force controlling them and follow the path of justice. Then all the treasures of the earth are unveiled, all the potentialities become effective and all that has been deposited in the earth and the space for the welfare of mankind blossoms forth and becomes available. All this will happen on the day when the Mahdi (May Allah hasten his solace) .will set up his government

Then the Muslim Ummah will take the reign of justice in its hand. The whole world will be following one single line of action. Consequently all latent capabilities will be unfolded. All this will be perfectly in accordance with the laws of history which indicate .the course of man's development

When man will have experimented with base and loose ideals and will cease to be attracted by them, he will naturally move in the right direction and will cast off stagnation, mental laziness and lethargy. As a result he will be drawn to the course that will lead him to this historical development. This subject is quite vast, but its .further discussion will require more time and space than available to us

Following European renaissance there was a need of a basic change in the method of studying the Islamic sources in order to be able to face the modern trends in the fields .of so-called science, philosophy, and Western Culture

It became necessary to look at the social, economic, political and psychological questions in the light of the vast original Islamic literature with the spirit of inquiry which became prevalent in the world following its emancipation from the ignorance of .middle ages and the ecclesiastical Inquisition

It became a duty of our Islamic centres of learning and our erudite Muslim scholars to take appropriate steps to check the onslaught of the flood of misconceptions and .exploitation of freedom and culture in the sacred name of science and religion

It was indifference or rather opposition of the Church and ecclesiastical circle to the movement of Renaissance that made religion confined to the four walls of the churches and turned out the Pope and his divines from the field of public .administration, economy, politics and cultural affairs

The Europeans who were jealous of the Muslims whose broad-mindedness they had experienced in Andalus (Spain) and other centres of learning which they frequented for receiving their education and who were envious of the grandeur of the Muslims in Baghdad, Iran, Egypt and other countries of which they had heard, imagined that .Islam was similar to their own religion

Subsequently in order to subdue the countries of the Muslim East and to facilitate their exploitation by the greedy

and corrupt white colonialists, they invented the theory of the separation of politics from religion and antagonism between the old and the new sciences. They tried to .create a gulf between these two views and the two systems

They not only separated the language of religion from the language of modern science, culture and philosophy, but also caused a big breach between the two with .the result that conciliation between these two languages becomes difficult

That is why whenever anyone of those religious-minded people who had been to Europe and were conversant with modern civilization and culture, tried to defend and propagate whatever of religion was left to him, he in most cases presented religion in a distorted and unpleasing form which appeared to be incompatible with modern .civilization and modern sciences

Many of our scholars, especially during the last ١٠٠ years have tried to bridge this gulf and to introduce modern science and civilization in a perspective compatible with the broad and progressive outlook of Islam and free from all misconceptions and .distortions

In this respect valuable contributions were made by such distinguished scholars as Sayyid Jamaluddin Asadabadi, Ayatullah Shaykh Balaghi, Ayatullah Mirza Muhammad Husayn Naini, Shaykh Muhammad Riza Najafi, Shaykh Hibatullah Shahristani, Mirza Abbas Ali Wa'iz Charindabi and lately Shaykh Muhammad Riza Muzaffar and .Professor Ahmad Amin

Anyhow the value of the work done by them has been limited and temporary. They could not cure the ailment of the young men who studied Western science, and the gulf between science and civilization

.on the one hand and religion and moral principles on the other continued as it was

This was the position till Ayatullah Sadr an illustrious scholar and a prominent personality of Shi'ah history appeared in Najaf and with his valuable and world famous works, did full justice to Western science, civilization, economics and .psychology, and dispelled all misgivings about them

Simultaneously with this intellectual movement, we in Iran also had certain scholars, though less known, who were fully conversant with the civilization and culture of the West and the East and who in their research work followed a correct line of thought .and critically examined modern science and civilization from Islamic point of view

Our philosopher and thinker Ayatullah Mutahhari, who laid down his life for the Islamic revolution in Iran, was virtually Ayatullah Sadr's comrade in-arms in his struggle for stopping the misuse of Western science and civilization. The difference between the two was that till his martyrdom Mutahhari was not introduced on a world level. Only .Muslim intellectuals took inspiration from him in their revolutionary activities

We see that the same line has been followed by some other distinguished scholars and philosophers like Allamah Tabataba'i the author of authentic commentary on the .Qur'an al-Mizan, the eminent Islamic thinker Muhammad Taqi Ja'fari and others

What distinguishes Ayatullah Sadr is that he had been busy with his intellectual struggle in the field of Our Philosophy, Our Economics and Our Culture on a world level long before others. Perhaps had mercenary Iraq not received instructions

from its masters, it would not have, despite its bloodthirstiness, dared to commit the crime of putting him to death. The big powers regarded this great scholar as a threat .to their imperialistic designs

The keenness which the Islamic Research Unit of the Renaissance Foundation is showing in publishing and popularizing the works of this scholar is not due to the fact that he and his illustrious sister were killed in cold blood by the henchmen of imperialism for the sole crime of defending our revolution. For this revolution many other people have sacrificed their lives, but we are unable to discharge our duty which .we owe to these martyrs

Then how can we render his due to this martyr who rendered valuable service to our ?people and the world at large

Actually the idea is to convey the thoughts of this great scholar who has shown his true Islamic thinking, deep knowledge and revolutionary spirit in all fields of .knowledge and philosophy boldly and successfully

This book is the fruit of his last discourse. It consists of ۱۴ lectures. The first two lectures discuss a change in the study of the exegesis of the Qur'an. They contain .very useful matter on the subject

From the third lecture the author enters into the topical discussion of the norms of history in the light of the Qur'an. With his deep study, he throws ample light on this new subject. He has made valuable contribution to the discussion of economic, political and sociological problems. In the important

۱۴th lecture he soars from the material world to the spiritual world, and there also .shows his mettle

Dr. Sayyid Jamal Musavi

What is Topical Exegesis? ۱

Exegetic Trends

point

It is an indisputable fact that with regard to the exegesis of the Qur'an there is a variety of views, and diverse methods are followed by every school of thought. This .can be clearly observed with a careful study of the books of exegesis of the Qur'an

Some commentators confine their attention to the literal aspect of the verses and .explain the Qur'an from the viewpoint of its wording, its diction and its inimitable style

Some others pay exclusive attention to the special features of its meaning and its .contents and subjects

There is a third group of the commentators who explain the verses of the Qur'an on the basis of traditions(۱) or explain each verse by comparing it to some other verse or verses. In this connection they also draw in the reports handed down from the Holy Prophet and the infallible Imams, and in the absence of such reports, they refer to the exposition of the verses by the companions of the Holy Prophet and those who .followed them

Again there are some commentators who with a view to justify the position held by their particular school try to reconcile the Qur'an with the opinions of that school. Finally there are some commentators who are not attached to any particular school and try to derive the answers to their questions direct from the Qur'an. They judge the correctness or incorrectness

١- (Ahadith)

of any opinion only on the basis of what the Qur'an says. They have no preconceived .ideas of their own

There are some other schools also, but we do not intend to dwell on them. All that we want to explain here is that on the whole there are two methods or two styles of the .exegesis of the Qur'an which we would like to study

One of these two styles may be called the "split" style and the other the "unified" or .the topical style

While commenting on the Qur'an in accordance with split style, the commentator arranges his commentary within the framework of the Qur'an according to the sequence of its verses. He divides the verses into sections and explains each section with the help of the tools available with him, such as the literal meaning of each verse and its reasonable connotation in the light of the relevant traditions and other verses of the Qur'an having a common concept or a common context. He makes every effort to pay full attention to these things in his commentary to bring out the correct .meaning of each section of the verses

Naturally when we speak of split exegesis, we mean the most advanced form of it, as available today, for exegesis has gradually developed from the simple explanation of .a few verses to its present advanced form which covers the whole Qur'an

The history of this style of exegesis goes back to the period of the companions of the Holy Prophet. In the beginning

it consisted of a commentary on a few verses only, which sometimes included the explanation of the words also. With the passage of time a need was felt for the exegesis of the whole Qur'an. Accordingly in the end of the third century and the beginning of the fourth century commentators like Ibn Majah, Tabari and others expounded the whole Qur'an and produced the most advanced models of split .exegesis

In the split style of exegesis foremost attention is paid to the literal meaning of the verses with a view to be able to understand the contents of the Qur'an. In the beginning it was quite simple to understand the meanings of the words, but it became .difficult as the distance from the period of the revelation increased

Though knowledge and experience have advanced, as a result of historical events the situation has changed, and proportionately this type of exegesis also has become complicated. Ambiguity has surrounded the contents of many words and verses. This difficulty of understanding the meanings has led to the compilation of the most .complex works on the commentary of the Qur'an as they exist today

In these commentaries we find that the commentator expounds the Qur'an verse by verse from the beginning to the end, for there are so many verses which with the passage of time need explanation. Meanwhile many cases of supporting evidence .have been traced. They are also explained by the commentator

In this connection it may be mentioned that we do not mean to

say that a commentator in the course of split exegesis does not refer to other connected verses or does not take a note of them for the purpose of understanding .the meaning of the verses under study

Reference to other relevant verses is a common and usual practice. Similarly a .reference is made to the traditions and reports also

Drawback of Split Exegesis

It is important to note that this reference is made with the sole purpose of knowing the literal meaning of the verse or a few verses under study. In this type of exegesis the commentator uses all possible means only to find out the literal meaning, and at .one time he studies only a small section of the Qur'an

But with a consecutive study of each and every section of the Qur'an, he can on the whole acquire a fair degree of knowledge of the contents and the fine points of the .whole Qur'an, though he does so only in a split and scattered form

Anyhow, he cannot determine the view of the Qur'an in regard to every field of life in respect of which Qur'anic verses have been revealed. Scattered information is there, but no connecting link exists to coordinate this information and provide the view of .the Qur'an with regard to each one of the various subjects and fields

Thus in split exegesis enough attention is not paid to the coordination of the verses, .though in certain cases their interrelation is explained

Danger of Split Exegesis

It is regrettable that this incoherent style of split exegesis has

led to many sectarian contradictions in Islamic society. Every group in order to win supporters to its doctrine, has interpreted the Qur'anic verses according to its own sectarian views, as it has been the case with the supporters of many scholastic .doctrines, such as the doctrines of predetermination, discretion and volition

Had these commentators taken just one step further, and looked a little beyond the few verses which they had collected, they could have avoided the mistake which they have committed. Such a situation did not arise in the case of topical style of exegesis, .which we now explain it

Topical Style

The second style of the exegesis of the Qur'an is topical or unified style. In this style the verses of the Qur'an are not split, nor is each verse studied consecutively. In contrast the topical commentator concentrates his investigations on some particular subject of life, dealt with by the Qur'an, whether the subject is doctrinal, social or universal, and ascertains the views of the Qur'an about it. For example he may undertake the study of such subjects, as 'the doctrine of monotheism', 'trends of .'history' or 'how the sky and the earth have come into being

In the course of its studies topical exegesis tries to ascertain the viewpoint of the Qur'an so that the message of Islam in respect of the questions pertaining to life and .the world may become clear

Relation Between Topical Exegesis and Split Exegesis

It may be mentioned that the frontiers between these two types of exegesis, like any other work or historical event, are

not definitely delineated. They often overlap each other, for in topical exegesis it is necessary to ascertain first from split exegesis the meanings of the words used in the .verses under study, before proceeding further

Similarly in the course of split exegesis we may come across some Qur'anic truth requiring deep study of a problem of life. In such a case exegesis tends to become .topical

Nevertheless, the two styles are independent of each other and each one of them has .its own purpose and a special import

Role of Tradition in Split Exegesis

One of the factors which gave impetus to split exegesis over many centuries is a tendency to make use of traditions and reports in the exegesis of the Qur'an. In fact, in the beginning exegesis was a part or a form of tradition,(١) and was founded on it. Next to tradition come some linguistic, literary and historical information which has .always been used for the purpose of exegesis

That is why exegesis could never take a step forward beyond the limit fixed for it by the Holy Prophet and the infallible Imams through their companions and those who followed them. It never allowed itself to carry out any independent inquiry into the meanings of the Qur'an, or to compare various concepts or to derive any theories .from the literal meanings of the verses

In these circumstances exegesis has been confined to literal interpretation, explanation of single words, in the course of which a new terminology has been developed, and elucidation of certain verses by recounting

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١- (hadith)

the occasions of their revelation. This practice could not entail any constructive and progressive role, nor could it imply an idea besides the literal meaning. It could not acquaint us with the basic ideas of the Qur'an dispersed in different verses of it.

Topical Style of Traditions in Islamic Jurisprudence

In order to bring closer to the mind the conception of topical exegesis, we can explain the difference between these two styles of exegesis by referring to what we find in Islamic jurisprudence.

In one sense jurisprudence is an interpretation of what the Holy Prophet and the Infallible Imams have said or have done. We are aware of the books in which in the course of the discussion of the rules of law, traditions have been mentioned consecutively, each tradition having been quoted separately, and studied from the viewpoint of the implication of its language, its chain of transmitters or its text, or from all these angles, depending on the method followed by each book. This is what has been done by the commentators of the Four Books(۱) and the commentator of the Wasa'ilush Shi'ah.

But most of the books on Islamic law have not followed this method. They have divided juristic discussion according to the needs of life, and have quoted the relevant traditions under every question of law to derive and elucidate the Islamic point of view regarding it. This is the topical style in regard to the rules of law, and the style mentioned above was the split style in regard to the interpretation of juristic

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۱- (Usul Kafi, Tahzib, Istibsar and Man La Yahzaruhul Faqih)

.traditions. Now let us study the general style of the books of jurisprudence

The juristic book al Jawahir is virtually a comprehensive commentary on the traditions contained in the Four Books. But this book does not explain each tradition separately. It has arranged the traditions according to the needs of life. The book has been arranged subject-wise and divided into chapters. There are, for example, chapters of .sale, agreement, reclamation of barren land, marriage and so on

In these chapters the relevant traditions have been collected and explained, and then under each question of law the relevant traditions have been checked against each other and after taking all of them into due consideration, rules of law have been derived. It may be mentioned that it is not enough to know the meaning of a tradition, .for no tradition in isolation can lead us to a rule of law

We can arrive at a rule of law or a rule of life only after studying all the traditions which may possibly have any connection with the question under study. Similarly we can deduce a doctrine or a theory only after an extensive and thorough study of all .the traditions on the subject. Nothing can be deduced from one single tradition

This was the topical style of explaining the juristic traditions. By holding a comparison between the Qur'anic and the juristic studies you can find out the difference between .topical and split styles of the exegesis of the Qur'an

While topical style became popular in connection

with juristic questions and was so developed that in the books of jurisprudence all rules of law are arranged in their appropriate chapters, a totally opposite trend developed in connection with the exegesis of the Qur'an. The style which dominated .exegesis for about ۱۳ centuries was split style

Every commentator of the Qur'an considered himself bound to explain the Qur'an verse by verse like his predecessors. The result was that topical style became the .common and popular style in jurisprudence and split style in exegesis

The studies which are confined to the occasions of revelation, abrogative and abrogated verses and the explanation of the words and the phrases used in their secondary meanings in the Qur'an, are in some cases known as topical exegesis. They .should not be given this name

These studies are no more than a collection of certain subjects picked from split exegesis. Hence they should not be called topical exegesis, which materializes only when we study a doctrinal, social or some other vital subject of life and evaluate it .from the viewpoint of the Qur'an

It appears to be most likely that as much as topical style has helped in the advancement and expansion of juristic thought and inquiry, the split style of exegesis has caused stagnation of the Islamic thought in the Qur'anic field and has blocked its continuous progress; so much so that centuries have passed since the books of Tabari, Razi and Tusi were compiled but Islamic thought in the field of exegesis has not

gone a step further than these books and nothing new has been added to Islamic .research in this field

During all this period exegesis has been static and in a state of immobility. It has taken no step forward except in some very insignificant cases. It remained static at a time .when many changes were taking place in different fields of life

Hence by holding a comparison between the two above-mentioned styles we can explain why split style has been a factor of the stagnation of exegesis and why the topical style has been effective in the progress and expansion of the process of deduction of the rules of Islamic law. Then we can conceive clearly why one style has .gained popularity while the other style became obsolete

As it is necessary that our conception of these two styles should be clear and definite, :some points of the difference between them are explained below

Role of Topical Exegesis in the Development of Islamic Research

First of all we should know that the method, which is followed by a commentator in split exegesis, is mostly negative. He takes one or more interconnected verses without any prior planning and tries to interpret them in the light of the literal meaning .of the text with the help of the general indications of its intendment

These indications may be internal or external. Anyhow, in all cases the commentator keeps his attention confined to the verse or the verses of the text and does not go a .single step further

We call this style negative, because in it the

role of the commentator is just to listen to what the verses of the Qur'an say, though of course, with a clear mind, keen literary sense and good knowledge of grammar and figures of speech. The commentator, so to say, sits besides the Qur'an to listen to .what it says

This position makes the role of the Qur'an active and that of the commentator passive or rather negative, for the Qur'an gives only as much as the commentator can take and assimilate. Consequently he records in his book only as much as he can .understand from the meaning of the text

But a topical commentator follows a different method. Before selecting a social or an ideological subject or a subject concerning life or the world he must concentrate enough attention on that subject and in order to collect the necessary data study the .ideas and experience of others

He must know the connected problems and their solutions as so far suggested by human thinking. He should be aware of the questions raised in connection with the subject (method of historical application) and any difference of opinion existing in .regard to it

When equipped with this data he studies the Qur'anic verses, he is no longer a dull listener or a mere reporter. When he studies a problem in the light of the Qur'an, he deals with a vast amount of human ideas and extensive human studies. When he begins his study of the text of the Qur'an, he puts questions and

.the Qur'an answers

The topical commentator, in the light of his data based on human efforts and studies tries to find out the viewpoint of the Qur'an in regard to his subject. He comprehends the opinion of the Qur'an by holding a comparison between the Qur'anic text and the .data acquired by him from the ideas and views of others

As such the results of topical exegesis are always consistent, well coordinated and concern the questions of human experience. These results show the signs of the limits fixed by the Qur'an in respect of that subject of human life. That is why we say that topical exegesis is a sort of a dialogue between the Qur'an and the commentator, and not a negative reaction to the Qur'an. Topical exegesis is an active and purposive work, as the result of which the Qur'anic text is used to throw light on some big truth .of life

In respect of the Qur'an Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, says in one of his sermons: "Make the Qur'an speak to you. It will never speak, but I tell you that it is the knowledge of what is going to happen and what has happened in the past. It is the remedy of all your maladies. It regulates and coordinates your affairs." (Peak of (Eloquence

Imam Ali, the true son of the Qur'an has said: "Make the Qur'an to speak". This is the finest way of describing the task of topical exegesis, which has been described as a

talk with the Qur'an and putting questions to it regarding every subject with a view to .finding answers to them

As such the basic difference between topical exegesis and split exegesis is the role of the commentator. In split exegesis his role is negative. He only listens and notes, whereas in topical exegesis, he must have an idea of the entire human heritage. He must have with him the ideas of his age so that he may put up to the Qur'an the outcome of human experience, so that the Qur'an(۱), may express its opinion and the commentator may derive this opinion from all relevant verses put together, not from .any isolated verse or verses

Thus in topical exegesis the Qur'an and the reality combine together, for topical exegesis begins from reality and ends at the Qur'an. On the other hand, split exegesis begins from the Qur'an and ends at the Qur'an. It has nothing to do with reality and life. In topical exegesis realities of life are put up to the Qur'an because it is our .guardian, our patron and our refuge. Life must be led under its guidance

That is why it is said that the Qur'an's power of guardianship and patronage permanently manifests itself. It is this quality of permanent guidance to which the traditions refer when they describe the Qur'an as inexhaustible. That is what the :Qur'an itself has also said

(The words of Allah could not be exhausted. (Surah Luqman, ۳۱:۲۷

Indeed the divine truths are endless. The

۱- at which falsehood cannot come from before it or behind it,

bounties of the Qur'an are unlimited, whereas the literal exegesis is limited and .exhaustible, for nothing new can be added to the literal meanings

Even if some words acquire some new meanings, the Qur'an cannot be taken to signify them, for any new meanings or any new terminology which have emerged after the revelation of the Qur'an cannot represent the intention of the Qur'anic verses. Any term which has come into use since the revelation of the Qur'an has no .connection with the Qur'an

As such the inexhaustibility of the Qur'an can be established only through topical style of exegesis. This style proves that the Qur'an is a record of the past as well as of the future knowledge. It is a remedy of our ailments. In it we can find the basis for regulating our affairs. Through it we can know the celestial view about all terrestrial .happenings

As such topical exegesis is capable of rapid development, for human experience makes it blossom. When the Qur'an is studied in the light of human experience, new .discoveries are made. That is the true way of understanding Islam

What is Topical Exegesis? ۲

Need of the Expansion of juristic Studies

We have already pointed out that since long juristic discussions have usually been arranged on topical basis, but in exegetic discussions the commentators have followed split style and expounded the Qur'an verse by verse from the beginning to the end. We do not mean to say that topical style being the usual practice in jurisprudence there is no longer any need of further topical

.investigations and studies in that field

Our juristic discussions also must be expanded now. As regards topical discussions we require new research both horizontally and vertically, for as we have said topical method begins from the realities of life and ends at the rules of Islamic law.(١)

It has always been the practice of our scholars and jurists to take their subjects of discussion from the realities of daily life and submit them to the judgement of Islamic law. Such daily transactions as offer of agreement, limited partnership, share-cropping of field and gardens have induced our jurists to deduce rules regarding them from the sources of Islamic law and state the provisions of law from divine point of .view

In fact, it must be recognized that topical style of jurisprudence also needs expansion. Over many centuries our scholars have continuously carried out their researches on the basis of topical style, and have deduced rules of law concerning every human need, but with the passage of time and complexity of civilization new dimensions have .been added to human life

Hence it has become necessary that with the expansion of the needs of life, the topical juristic investigations should also expand. This shows that although the investigation into juristic rules begins with concrete realities, yet it is to a large extent confined to the realities of the period of the late Shaykh Tusi or the late Muhaqqiq Hilli, while the realities of their lifetime could meet the needs of their time only, and

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١- (Horizontal expansion in juristic discussion means the study of the questions and the rules of law which did not exist previously, but in modern life they have become a matter of daily requirement. The Shi'ah jurists call them `current issues'. They have compiled special treatises to cover these questions and have issued them as supplements to their main treatises. Such new questions include the questions of grafting limbs, plastic surgery, artificial insemination, prayers in polar regions and such transactions as insurance and dealings in value-bearing papers like cheques,

drafts, bonds and company shares. Vertical expansion of topical method includes looking deep into the rules of Islamic law and discovering the values which the law-giver of Islam never consented to dispense with.()

.not the needs of our time

For example, the transactions, such as leasing, sharecropping and partnership as mentioned in their books represent the market conditions of ۸۰۰ or ۱۰۰۰ years ago, while the market conditions and the nature of transactions have changed today and .economic relations have become complex

Therefore jurisprudence today must follow the same course that it did follow during the time of the past scholars, when it showed reaction to every event and every condition of life. As rules relating to every situation that existed at that time were deduced from religion, the scholars of our time also must study the problems of today topically and deduce rules relating to them from the general principles of Islam so .that jurisprudence may expand horizontally to the required degree

Vertically also the same topical style of jurisprudence should be pursued so that juristic research may effectively expand. In other words it is essential that juristic question are deeply studied vertically and basic principles of jurisprudence are .discovered. Tall buildings must be erected on juristic foundations

Elaborate laws should be framed reflecting the Islamic point of view, for as we know, every set of Islamic laws concerning every field of life is linked with basic principles ensuring human development in the field of Islamic legislation. We find this principle clearly reflected in Islamic economy and the Islamic laws concerning marriage and .divorce

For example, see the rules of Islamic law in respect of marriage and conjugal relations. They are linked with the

role of man and woman in life as determined by Islam. Islamic views in this respect .are basis and fundamental

On them the whole structure of the relevant law is based. It will be wrong to suppose that the rules of law are incoherent ideas of jurisprudence. They are not a literary miscellany. They should be regarded as a natural need and as far as humanly possible .effort should be made to unravel their underlying idea and their rationale

Need of Topical Exegesis

Now we revert to the points of difference between topical exegesis and split exegesis. We have already given some reasons why topical exegesis is preferable. As we have pointed out, the field of topical exegesis is vaster and more fruitful. It is more advanced than split exegesis. It can continuously make progress and make new discoveries, for this type of exegesis is based on human experience and as human .experience advances, it becomes more fruitful

In topical exegesis the accuracy of the data provided by human experience is checked against the Qur'an. That is the only way that enables us to find out the basic views of .the Qur'an and Islam in regard to different subjects of life

It may be said: What is the need of finding out these basic views of Islam? For example, what is the need of knowing the general theory of Islam about Prophethood? Is there any need of knowing what the Qur'an says about the trends of history? Or why would we interpret the social changes in the

?light of what the Qur'an says? Why should we know the Islamic law of economy

Is there any reason why should we know what the Qur'an means by the words of sky and earth? What is the need of knowing the significance of these words and deducing theories relating to them. We know that the Holy Prophet himself refrained from .describing any such theory in exact and definite terms

Generally speaking he has not mentioned any such theories. He only presented the Qur'an to the Muslims in its present form. Then why should we trouble ourselves to ?derive from it any separate theories

In fact, today we feel a basic need of discovering these theories and cannot dispense .with this need

The Holy Prophet explained these theories in the context of the Qur'an in a way suited to his environment. He applied them on the whole to Islamic life. Now it is a duty of every Muslim to rediscover these theories within the ideological framework of that .time. That framework was natural, though it might be a little primitive

It is only the spiritual, social, intellectual and instructional framework prescribed by the Holy Prophet that can convey to us his ideas in a perfect form. It alone can evaluate every situation and every event of any time and can apply what it says to all .situations

:If you compare between two common situations, this idea will be understood better

Suppose a man is living among the people who speak a particular language. He wants to learn

their language and its usage, and wants to know how their mind reaches from a word to its meaning and how they comprehend the exact meaning of a word. Now there .are two ways of doing this

One way is that he should mix up with the people of that society and fully participate in their activities. If he does that for some time, he will become familiar with the correct use of their language and as a result his mind will begin to move from the .words to their meanings as required by that language and its usage

As this man lives among those who speak the language as their mother tongue, a hidden stock of the meanings will soon be deposited in his mind. As a word will be uttered he will draw upon that stock and understand the word correctly. As a result of his contact with those who speak the language as their mother tongue, he will get an .insight into the language like them

In contrast a man who is not living in the society of those who speak the language -as their mother tongue, but wants to become conversant with its correct usages, has no alternative but to refer to its grammar and composition. He will have to acquire the .ability of deriving its general rules

Take the case of Arabic language. In the beginning the Arabs had to make no effort to learn it, for they lived in a predominantly Arab society. But later

when their atmosphere changed and with the entry of other languages into their life, their own language became weak and mixed with a large number of foreign words, .need was felt for the development of Arabic grammar and the theories of philology

As the atmosphere was no longer conducive to learning correct Arabic, it became necessary to study it in scientific lines. Theories were formed for consideration, discussion and criticism, so that the language may be moulded according to scientific .rules and new theories. This was only an approximate example to explain our point

The companions who lived along with the Holy Prophet might not have understood his views as general principles, but there is no doubt that they on the whole absorbed his .ideas and were mentally impressed by them

The general condition of the social, spiritual and mental framework in which they lived was helpful in understanding the Holy Prophet's teachings and creating an accurate standard for the purpose of evaluating the things. But such a helpful atmosphere and appropriate conditions do not exist today. At a time when a need is being felt for the study of the views of the Qur'an in respect of the science of Islam, how can the ?general and universal theories in this respect be ignored

During contacts between the Muslim world and the Western world expression is given to many divergent theories and points of view. Although the Muslims have vast treasures of intellectual resources and the Qur'an has provided them with a rich

and varied source of learning in all branches of human knowledge, when there is a contact between a Muslim and a Westerner, the Muslim finds himself faced with so many theories which have emerged in different fields of life. Therefore it is a duty of .the Muslims to know Islamic view vis-à-vis other theories

For this purpose they have no alternative but to go deep into the texts of Islam and find out Islam's stand in order to be able to understand how Islam has solved particular problems in a way commensurate with intelligent human experience in .different fields of life

Cooperation Between Topical and Split Styles

In this respect we have come to the conclusion that topical style is the best style of exegesis. But that does not mean that we are in favour of totally abandoning split style, for superiority of one style does not mean the abandonment or suppression of the other style. It only means that more attention should be paid to the better style, .for topical exegesis is one step ahead of split exegesis

Split exegesis being the foundation on which topical exegesis is based, there is no sense in superseding it. All that we mean is that instead of one two steps should be taken, the first step being split exegesis and the second step, which is more .advanced, being topical exegesis

Topical Exegesis ۳

point

We have already mentioned some points which require that preference should be given to topical exegesis rather than to usual split exegesis. On the basis of these observations, we

have shown that topical exegesis is more fruitful and more capable of making new discoveries and finding out the principles on which the whole Qur'anic system is .based

Now we would like to give another practical reason why topical exegesis is preferable. It takes a very long time to complete the usual course of exegesis from the beginning of the Qur'an to the end of it. That is why only a small number of Muslim scholars have had the honour of completing it. We feel that even the whole life is short to complete this long course. So we prefer a short course during which a few selected subjects of .the Qur'an may be thoroughly studied

Accordingly we have chosen a few subjects and collected the relevant material on which the Qur'an throws light. We propose to make as far as possible a coordinated study of these important subjects. We would deal only with the basic principles and fundamental ideas connected with them and will try to cover each of these subjects is not more than five to ten lectures so that we may be able to deal with a good variety (of the Qur'anic subjects.(١

Now the question was with which subject we should begin. The first subject which we have chosen for discussion is the 'Trends of History in the Qur'an.' Has human history any definite trends or norms in the Qur'anic sense? Are the developments in human history governed by any laws? What are the laws which

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Unfortunately out of these subjects the late Ayatullah Shahid could deal with only -١ one subject, that is 'The Trends of History' Saddam, the despotic ruler of Iraq did not allow this great scholar any further opportunity, and following a long period of detention by the authorities in Iraq, he was martyred on ٢٣rd Jumadiul Awwal, ١۴٠٠ .A.H

make human history? How did human history begin and how does it develop? What ?are the factors effective in the theory of history

What is man's role in history and what is Allah's role in it? How can Prophethood play a ?role in this social field

These are the points which have been dealt with by the Qur'an in its important sections from different angles in order to elucidate the trends of history. For example, the stories of the Prophets which form an important part of the Qur'anic material from historical point of view, have been discussed by a good number of historians. They .have dealt with all the events and happenings mentioned by the Qur'an

Wherever they have observed any gap, they have filled it with the help of traditions, the Holy Books of the former religions or with help of myths and the folktales. They have compiled their books in the style of historical stories, based on this Qur'anic .material

These stories have been studied from another angle also. The Qur'an's style of story-telling and its value from the viewpoint of its originality, freshness and its motivating .power have been discussed thoroughly

We now want to discuss this Qur'anic material from still another angle. We want to see if some part of this material can throw any light on the norms of history. In other words, we want to see if we can reasonably infer, from the Qur'an any laws regulating .history and its trends

The field of history like any other field

is full of phenomena. Just as phenomena constitute the fields of cosmology, physics and botany, similarly the field of history also is full of phenomena in the sense that we will explain later, just as scientific phenomena are governed by their laws, similarly in .the case of history also we can look for its laws

We can ask: Do there exist any laws and norms which govern the historical events? Has the Qur'an expressed any positive or negative, detailed or brief opinion about ?such laws? Can the Qur'an carry out any scientific investigations

Some people think that as we should not expect the Qur'an to discuss any physical, cosmological, nuclear and botanical laws, similarly we should not expect it to .scientifically discuss the laws of history

The Qur'an is not a book of scientific discussions and discoveries. It is a Book of Guidance. It is also not a textbook revealed to the Holy Prophet as a teacher, for being taught to any group of specialists and educationists. It has been revealed to bring the people from darkness to light - from the darkness of pre-Islamic period to the light of .the guidance of Islam

Hence the Qur'an is a book that guides, instructs and develops man, not a book of scientific discoveries. That is why we do not expect it to let us know the principles of science. We do not want it to explain to us the problem of physics, chemistry, botany .or zoology

It is true that in the Qur'an there are

hints of all these sciences and as far as possible the Qur'an has dealt with them with divine deepness, for it is a book which covers the past, the present and the future. It has been able to go hundreds of years ahead of human experiments in the discovery of scientific truths. But in spite of all that it is obvious that these hints are meant only for instructional and practical purposes and do not aim at teaching physics, chemistry .etc

The Qur'an does not want to take the place of man's creative power, nor does it want to restrain man from using his own talents and capabilities. It is man's indisputable right to make discoveries in all fields of life through his vast knowledge and .experience

The Qur'an does not want to occupy this science. It introduces itself as a spiritual and psychological power which can build man and by causing an explosion within him can .make him march forward in the right direction

When we recognize that the Qur'an is a Book of Guidance, not a book of scientific discoveries, it is improper to expect it to discuss the general principles of science. These principles should be discovered by man by means of understanding the laws governing them. Why should we expect the Qur'an to stipulate any principle in this field or to have any particular point of view in this respect? Why should we ask the Qur'an to give us any scientific conception of the trends of history? What

?special connection has the Qur'an with this particular field

If the Qur'an begins to deal with such laws and make such discoveries, the character and purpose of the book will be changed. Instead of being a book revealed for the entire humanity, it will be degraded to being a book for the specialists in a particular .science belonging to a particular period

Difference Between History and Other Sciences

This objection is valid in itself, and on the whole, it is correct to say that the Qur'an is a-Book of Guidance, not of science, and that it does not want to curtail the scope of .human effort, nor does it want to dry up man's powers of development and originality

But still there is a basic difference between the field of history and the fields of the rest of the sciences of the world. This basic difference turns history and the laws governing it, into a thing which is closely related to the function of the Qur'an as .Guidance. That is not the case with other sciences

In short, the Qur'an is a Book of Guidance which brings about the desired change in ,man, that is, in the words of Qur'an itself

(it brings them out o f darkness into light. (Sarah al-Baqarah, ۲:۲۵۷

This desired change must have two aspects. The first aspect of it concerns actions. Man must come back to the adherence of necessary laws. This aspect of the change is divine in the sense that it relates to the divine laws revealed to the Holy

Prophet, the revelation of which covers the laws as well as the trends of history, for these laws are ahead of the environment in which the Qur'an was revealed and more extensive than the individual sent to preach them. This aspect of the desired change represents a change in the content, that is a change in the laws and rules according to .which one is called upon to act

This is the divine aspect of the change. But there is another aspect of it. The change was originally carried out by the Holy Prophet and his devoted companions. It becomes a human act when we see that this vital change first took place in a particular group of people, that is the Holy Prophet and his companions. It may be .regarded as an embodied social action in these persons

This change becomes a human act when we see that it came into clash with various other social trends from all around and faced dogmatic battles and social, political and military encounters. It becomes a human act when we see it in its human form in history and observe its relationship with other trends and other groups which either .support it or oppose it

It becomes a human act when we see it from all these angles. The Holy Prophet and his companions were as human beings as any other people. Like any other human .society they were also governed by historical laws

Thus this process of change of which the

Qur'an speaks and which was carried out by the Holy Prophet, has two aspects. From the viewpoint of its having been connected with the revelation and the source of revelation, it is divine and ultra historical, but as it had a historical background and involved the effort of human being and faced the opposition of some others, we call it a historical act governed by the laws of history determined by Allah to regulate all .historical phenomena

That is why we believe that when the Qur'an speaks from the standpoint of the people governed by the same rules as all other human beings and makes no mention .of a heavenly mission

We see that when the Qur'an speaks of the set-back of the Muslims in the Battle of Uhud following their remarkable victory in the Battle of Badr and explains why they .suffered a defeat, it does not say that the heavenly mission was defeated

A heavenly mission is far above success and failure which pertain to material situations only. A heavenly mission does not run away from the battlefield and will never run away. The person who runs away is a human being, not the school of Islam. Even if this person is an embodiment of a heavenly mission, he is still a man governed :by the laws of history. In this respect the Qur'an says

These (victories and defeats) are only the vicissitudes which We cause to follow one (another for mankind. (Surah Ale-Imran, ۳:۱۴۰

In this verse the Qur'an speaks

to the people as such and says that the event of Uhud is merely a question of the laws and norms of history. The Muslims gained victory at Badr because they through their own efforts fulfilled the conditions which necessitated their victory. At Uhud the :conditions necessitated their defect, and hence they were defeated. The Qur'an says

If you have received a blow, the disbelievers also had received a similar blow. These are only the vicissitudes which We cause to follow one another. (Surah -Ale Imran, (۳:۱۴۰

The Qur'an means to say that the Muslims must not think that it is their divine right to gain victory and receive divine help. Victory is the natural right of those who fulfil the conditions conducive to it. Allah has fixed laws and norms of victory in this world. He .awards victory only to those who observe these laws

The Muslims were defeated at Uhud because they could not make themselves concordant with the conditions of victory. The above verse talks about human action, .not about a divine action which may be termed heavenly help

The Qur'an has gone still further. Threatening mankind it says if these men will not perform their historical duty, and will not act on the basis of their heavenly mission, .the laws and norms of history will not be suspended for them

Their position will surely change, and the laws and norms of history will put them aside and will bring in their place some other peoples who fulfil the

conditions of victory and are capable of performing a better role so that they may be .witnesses of this ummah (nation) when this ummah will be a witness of others

:The Qur'an says

If you do not go forth, He will afflict you with a painful doom, and will choose instead o f you a people other than you. You cannot harm Him at all. Allah is able to do every (thing. (Surah Tawbah, ٩:٣٩

Believers, whosoever of you becomes a renegade from his religion, (in his stead) Allah will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him, humble towards believers, stern towards disbelievers, striving in the way o f Allah and fearing not the blame of any blamer. Such is the grace of Allah which He gives unto whom He will. Allah is All-(Embracing, All-Knowing. (Surah al-Maidah, ٥:٥۴

Here the Qur'an talks about the second aspect of the process of change and tells man his weak and strong points. It speaks of man's rectitude and deviation and of the conditions conducive to his activity and inertness. This shows that the discussion of laws of history is a subject that concerns the Qur'an as a Book of Guidance and as a book which leads man from the darkness of perdition to the light of rectitude, for the .practical or the human aspect of this process is influenced by the norms of history

Hence we should be inspired by this human aspect, and it is in the fitness of things that the Qur'an

should give us some indication as to how it determines the framework of its outlook .on the trends of history

This shows that the case of the laws and norms of history is different from that of the laws of physics, chemistry, astronomy, biology, botany etc. These laws and norms are not directly affected by the historical process, but the process of change is directly influenced by it. Hence when the second aspect of the change is studied, it is .necessary that the trends of history should be explained

The Qur'an should give us some general principles in this respect. Of course it is not proper to expect the Qur'an as a Book of Guidance to turn into a book of history and its trends, and give details of even those points which have no connection with the .process of the change

The Qur'an cannot deal with the details which are not effective in the change desired by the Holy Prophet, although these details are also covered by the trends of history. The Qur'an pays attention only to the basic and important things. For the Qur'an it is enough to be a Book of Guidance and a Book that leads from darkness to light. It .works exclusively within this framework which has great importance in itself

The Qur'an mentions some historical events and the laws of history, but only with a view to throwing light on the process of change. It does so within the limits of providing a correct outlook on

.the conditions and events of life and the limits observed by the Holy Prophet

During our study of the Qur'an we observe that it has mentioned the laws of history with the same firmness as is applicable to the laws of cosmology. The Qur'an is quite explicit in this respect, and has pointed to this fact in different ways. In many verses it has been mentioned as a general rule that the historical vicissitudes represented by .the Qur'anic stories are governed by the laws of history

This fact has been mentioned in some other verses where these laws and the instances to which they apply have been described, and some examples of what .happens to man in the course of history have been given

In some verses this fact has been mentioned in such a way that the theories and their application have been mixed together. In other words after giving a general principle .some instances of its application also have been described

There are some other verses which exhort to the study of the past events, and encourage a thorough investigation of them. As you know such investigation in itself is .a scientific work aiming at finding out the law by looking into details

Thus the Qur'an in different ways and different tones has explained the trends of .history and has unfolded them

Norms of history mentioned in the Qur'an

point

As we have said the Qur'anic concept of the norms of history has been mentioned in a large number of its verses and the fact of their existence has been

.emphasized in many ways

In some verses the concept of the norms has been given in general terms and in some other verses their examples have also been given. Similarly some verses call upon us to make a thorough investigation of historical events in order to find out historical trends and norms. We see that a very large number of verses have dealt .with this subject in different ways

In this connection we propose to quote a good number of verses. Some of the verses which we produce here as evidence, quite clearly indicate the existence of the norms of history. Some other verses, though not so specific, are in perfect harmony with the spirit of the teachings of the Qur'an regarding this issue, and may be looked upon as a .supporting evidence

Some Examples of Norms of History in the Qur'an

The following two verses are an example of those verses of the Qur'an which :describe the idea of the laws and the norms of history in general terms

For every nation there is an appointed time. When their time comes, then they cannot put it back an hour, nor can they put it forward. (Surah Yunus, ۱۰:۴۹, Surah al-A'raf, (۷:۳۴

As may be noticed, in these two verses it has been said that for every nation, that is for every society there is an appointed time. It is evident that this "appointed time" is .different from that which exists in the case of every individual

The Qur'an calls ummah or nation that society the members of which are linked together on the

basis of some common ideas and principles which furnish them with certain common powers and capabilities. Such a society has an appointed time. In other words like an individual, it lives, moves and dies. So long as an individual moves, we say that he is alive. When he ceases to move, he dies. The same is the case with a society. As the death of an individual has an appointed time and is governed by a law and a system, similarly societies also have their appointed time and are governed by certain laws of .their own

These two verses give us a clear idea that history has some norms which are different from the laws and norms which exclusively apply to the individuals. Allah says in the :Qur'an

And We destroyed no township, but there was a known decree for it. No nation can outstrip its appointed time, nor can they lag behind. (Surah al-Hijr, ۱۵:۴-۵)

:Exactly the same thing is mentioned in the following verses

No nation can outstrip its appointed time, nor can they lag behind. (Surah al-Mu'minun, ۲۳:۴۳)

Have they not seen the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and what things Allah has created, and that it may be that their own term was nigh? In what report after that will they believe? (Surah al-A'raf, ۷:۱۸۵)

The wording of the verses indicate that the appointed time which is nigh or about the nearness of which warning is being given, refers to the collective death of a society, not the individual

death of its members, for all members of a nation do not normally die together. When the collective death of a people is mentioned, it means their social death, not their .individual death

As we know individually people die at different times. But when we look at them as one group bound together in matters of justice and injustice, prosperity and misery, then they have one appointed time of death. This social death is the death of a nation. :In this sense the following verse is closely linked with the verse preceding it

Your Lord is Forgiver, full o f Mercy. If He were to take them to task, for what they earn, He would hasten on the doom for them; but they have an appointed term from which they will find no escape. And those townships! We destroyed them when they did wrong, and We appointed a fixed time for their destruction. (Surah al-Kahf, ۱۸:۵۸-۵۹)

If Allah were to take mankind to task for their wrongdoing, He would not leave a single living creature on the face of earth, but He reprieves them to an appointed time, and when their appointed time comes, they cannot put it off an hour nor can (they advance it. (Surah an-Nahl, ۱۶:۶۱

If Allah were to take mankind to task for what they earned, He would not leave a living creature on the face of the earth; but He reprieves them to an appointed time, (and when their term comes, then surely (they will know that

(Allah is ever aware of His slaves. (Surah Fatir, ۳۵:۴۵

In the last two verses the Qur'an says that if Allah wanted to take people to task during their lifetime, He would not leave a living creature and would destroy all .people

Difference Between Punishment in This Life and the Next

Now there is a difficulty about this Qur'anic concept. As we know, all people are never unjust. There may be Prophets, Imams and their executors living among them. Will this general destruction include the Prophets, the Imams and the righteous believers? This doubt has been so magnified that some people have produced these two verses .as a proof of the invalidity of the idea of the infallibility of the Prophets and the Imams

The fact is that these two verses neither speak of this worldly punishment nor that of the next world. They speak of the natural consequence of the unjust deeds of a nation. The natural consequences of its deeds do not remain confined to the wicked of society but encompasses all its members irrespective of their personalities and .conduct

When as a result of their misconduct Israelites were doomed to roaming about in the desert, this punishment did not remain confined to the wicked. It equally affected Prophet Musa, who was the most pure and active person of his time and who most courageously had faced the tyrant and his tyranny. Prophet Musa being a member of the community had to share the chastisement inflicted on the community as a whole for its wickedness. Consequently he also had to wander

.about in the desert for ۴۰ years along with other Israelites

Where as a result of their deviation from the right path the Muslims were afflicted with a calamity and Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah was imposed on them to ride roughshod over their lives, property, honour and creed, it were not the wrongdoers among the .Muslims society alone who suffered

Even the infallible Imam Husayn, the grandson of the Holy Prophet, who was the most virtuous and the most upright person on the face of the earth, was killed along with his companions and the members of his family. All this was in consonance with the logic of the norms of history. When a punishment in this world comes to a society in accordance with the norms of history, it does not remain confined to the unjust of that :society. That is why the Qur'an says

Guard yourselves against a chastisement which cannot fall exclusively on those of you who are wrongdoers, and know that Allah is severe in punishment. (Surah al-(Anfal, ۸:۲۵

:At the same time the Qur'an at another place says

(No burdened soul can bear another's burden. (Surah Fatir, ۳۵:۱۸

Yes, in the next world only the culprits will be punished. But this worldly punishment is more extensive and affects the culprit and the innocent alike. Hence the two previous verses have nothing to do with the punishment that will be awarded on the Day of Judgement. They speak only of the norms of history and what a nation can

.achieve through its efforts

:Another Example

They indeed wish to scare you from the land so that they may drive you out from there. In that case they will not be able to stay there for long. Same has been our method in the case of Our Messengers whom We sent before you, and you will not (find Our method to be changing. (Surah Bani Isra'il, ۱۷:۷۶

:This verse also lays stress on the norms of history. It says

.You will not find Our method (Our law) to be changing

In other words, Allah assures that the way He treated the former Prophets is still valid .because His law never changes

Allah says that the people of Makkah now want to harass the Prophet in order to drive him out from there, for they have failed to eliminate him, to silence his voice and to crush his mission. Now the only option left to them is to drive the Prophet out of their .city. This is one of the norms of history which we propose to explain

According to this norm the people of Makkah could not stay there for long when after the failure of all their efforts to resist the Holy Prophet they had become so desperate as to drive him out of this city. This did not mean that any chastisement was to befall them soon. Hence it cannot be said that no chastisement befell the people of Makkah while they successfully harassed the Holy Prophet and forced him to emigrate

.to Madina

What the verse means is that they will not for long continue to be a fighting force, for because of their behaviour they will soon lose their position and will cease to be a force to be reckoned with. The Prophet who has baffled their designs so far, in future also will succeed in practically overawing them and breaking their resistance. And so it .was

After the Holy Prophet left Makkah, they could not withstand for long. Their resistance was broken. Makkah fell and became a Muslim State. A few years later it became the .second centre of Islam

Thus the above quoted verse first speaks of a norm of history and then emphatically :declares

.You will never find our method to be changing

:The following verses are other examples

There have been many examples before you. So travel across the land and see what (has been the fate of the rejecters. (Surah Ale Imran, ۳:۱۳۷

This verse lays stress on the norms of history and urges people to follow the truth and look into historical events to learn a lesson from them and find out the trends of .history

Messengers indeed have been denied before you, but they were patient under the denial and prosecution till Our help reached them. There is none to alter the words of Allah (the conditions of His promises). Already there have reached you some reports (about the Messengers. (Surah al-An'am, ۶:۳۴

This verse encouraging the Holy Prophet, tells him of what the past people experienced, and

explains that in this respect there exists a law and a norm which is equally valid in his .case as it has been in the case of the former Prophets

In accordance with this law which has already proved correct in the case of the former Prophets, he will soon receive divine help and will gain victory provided he fulfils all the pre-requisite conditions. These conditions are patience, perseverance :etc. Success can be achieved only through these traits. That is why the Qur'an says

They were patient under the denial and the persecution till Our help reached them. There is none to alter the words of Allah - the conditions of His promises. (Surah al-(An'am, ۶:۳۴

According to this verse the words of Allah cannot be altered. In other words the pre-requisite conditions and the circumstances on the materialization of which the .fulfilment of His promises depends, cannot change over history

Here `word' signifies the relation between success and the fulfilment of its conditions and other circumstance, as explained in different verses dispersed in the Qur'an. Only .a hint has been made here. This relation is a norm of history

?Are the Norms of History Changeable

:On the basis of this norms the Qur'an says

When a warner came to them, it aroused in them nothing but repugnance, arrogance in the land, and plotting evil; and the evil plot encloses only the men who make it. Then do they expect the application of a law different from that which applied to the people of the old? You will

not find any change in Allah's law, nor will you find any case of its failure. (Surah al-Fatir, ۳۵: ۴۲-۴۳)

Did you suppose that you would enter paradise while yet you have not come to the like of that which befell those who passed away before you? They were afflicted by misery and hardship and were so severely shaken that the messenger and those who believed along with him said: `When comes Allah's help?' Now surely Allah's help is nigh! (Surah al-Baqarah, ۲:۲۱۴)

Allah criticizing these people, asks them why they expect that there should be an exception in their case with regard to the norms of history?

They should not expect that the laws of history would fail to be effective in their case and they would enter paradise without leading the life of those nations which were successful and entered paradise. These nations passed a hard life so much so that in the words of the Qur'an, they were severely shaken. Hardships, worries and unfavourable circumstances are a sort of a training school for this Ummah and are a test of its will and perseverance.

They are an exercise which enables this Ummah to gain power gradually and occupy the position of the middle nation. Allah's help is nigh, but it has a method. It is not accidental, nor does anyone get it haphazardly.

Allah's help is nigh, but according to the Qur'an, to get it, it is necessary to know historical norms and understand the logic of history, for it

often happens that a patient has his medicine near at hand, but he does not use it .because he is not aware of its medicinal properties

The knowledge of the norms of history enables people to receive divine help. The above verse denounces those who wish to be an exception to the norms of history. :The Qur'an says

We sent not to any township a warner, but it's pampered ones declared: `Surely we are disbelievers in that which you bring to us'. And they say we are (more than you) in wealth and children. (In the Hereafter too) we are not going to be punished. (Surah (Saba, ۳۴:۳۴ - ۳۵

All over history and in all societies there has always been the same relationship between the Prophets and the pompous people living in luxury. This relationship .points to a norm of history

It should not be regarded as a mere chance. Had it been a chance only, it would not have been repeated again and again and would not have acquired a generality to the :extent that Allah says

"...:We sent not to any township a warner, but its pampered ones declared

Therefore there is always a negative relationship and a contradiction between the celestial missions in the social life of people and the position taken by the pampered ones living in luxury. In fact this relationship separates the role of the Prophets in .social life from that of the luxurious ones

On the whole this relationship is a part

of the social outlook of these two groups, as we will explain when we deal with the role of Prophethood in society and the social position of the Prophets. There we shall show that those who live in luxury are the natural opponents of Prophethood in .society

:That is why the Qur'an says

When We would destroy a township We send commandments to its people who lead a luxurious life, and they commit abominations therein, and so the word of doom has effect for it, and thus We annihilate that township completely. How many generations have We destroyed since Nuh! And Allah suffices as the Knower and the Beholder of (the sins of His slaves. (Surah Bani Isra'il, ۱۷: ۱۶ -۱۷

This verse speaks of a definite relationship between the injustice of the rulers and the destruction which follows it. The verse emphasizes that this relationship being a :historical norm, has existed all over history. On this very subject another verse says

If they had observed the Tawrat and the Injil and that which was revealed from (above them and from beneath their feet. " (Surah al-Maidah, ۵:۶۶

:Still another verse says

If the people of the township had believed and refrained from evil, surely We should have opened for them blessings from the sky and from the earth. But they denied, (and so We seized them on account of what they used to earn. (Surah al-A`raf, ۷: ۹۶

Had they kept treading the right path, we would have given them abundant water to

(drink. (Surah al-Jinn, ۷۲:۱۶

The above three verses show that there is a special relationship between acting in accordance with the commandments of Allah on the one hand, and prosperity and abundance of production on the other. In modern terminology it may be called the .relation between fair distribution and increased production

The Qur'an emphasizes that there can be no shortage of production and no poverty where fair distribution prevails. Fair distribution increases wealth and boosts up prosperity. Some people think that fair distribution causes poverty, but that is not true. The trend of history proves contrary to that and shows that whenever celestial rules of distribution are observed, national wealth increases and the blessings of the .heaven and the earth are showered

Necessity of Investigating Historical Events

Other verses of the Qur'an urge the people to thoroughly examine the historical events and ponder over them so that they may discover the laws of nature and the trends and norms of history. Allah says in the Qur'an: Have they not travelled in the land to see the nature of the consequence for those who were before them? Allah wiped them out. And for the disbelievers there will be the like thereof. (Surah (Muhammad, ۴۷:۱۰

Have they not travelled in the land and seen the nature of the consequence for those (who were before them? (Surah Yusuf, ۱۲: ۱۰۹

How many a township have We destroyed while it was sinful, so that lies in ruin, and ,how many a deserted well and lofty tower! Have they not travelled in the land

so that they may have hearts to feel and ears to hear? For indeed it is not the eyes (that grow blind, but it is the hearts in the bosom, that grow blind. (Surah al-Hajj, ۲۲: ۴۶

How many a generation have We destroyed before them, who were mightier than these in prowess so that they overran the lands! Had they any place of refuge? Surely therein is a reminder for him who has a heart or gives ear with full intelligence? (Surah (Qaf, ۵۰: ۳۶ - ۳۷

These verses taken together make clear the concept of the norms of history. They emphatically say that like any other field there exist definite laws in the field of history .too

Importance of Discovering Norms of History From the Qur'an

The discovery of this Qur'anic concept is a big achievement, for as we know, the Qur'an is the first book which emphatically and in a very convincing way tells us of the existence of the norms of history and severely opposes the idea that events take place automatically. It also rejects the view that all events being divinely decreed, we .have no choice but to submit to them

Most people regard historical events as a series of incongruous happenings. They interpret them on the basis of accident, fate or power of Allah, whose decree cannot .be resisted

The Qur'an is absolutely against this wrong idea. It does not consider any event to be without a cause or to be a mere manifestation of Allah's irresistible power. In contrast, it tells human intelligence that the field of

history is governed by definite laws and norms, and that to be the master of his destiny man must know them. If you are aware of these laws, you can influence them, otherwise if you keep your eyes shut, these laws will certainly overpower you. Therefore you should open your eyes so that you may recognize them and dominate .them instead of being dominated by them

This great Qur'anic discovery paved the way for human intelligence to understand and realize the practical role of history in human life. Eight centuries after the revelation of the Qur'an efforts in this respect were begun by the Muslims .themselves

It was Ibn Khaldun who undertook the study of history and discovered its laws and norms. At least four centuries thereafter in the beginning of the Renaissance period the Europeans began to pay attention to this subject which was not pursued further .by the Muslims

The Europeans discussed this subject from various angles, and the basis of their way of thinking each of the various European schools of thought such as the idealists, the materialists and others tried to determine the laws of history from its own point of .view

As a result several theories emerged, the most renowned and clamorous of them being historical materialism or Marxism which has influenced history itself. Therefore we may say that all efforts in this connection has been inspired by the Qur'an, which still retains the proud privilege of introducing this idea for the first time in the field

.of human knowledge

Norms of History in the Qur'an

:Three Basic Points

Three basic points can be derived from the passages of the Qur'an to prove the existence of the norms of history. The Qur'an has emphasized these points or facts .and presented the laws of history through them

I. The first fact is that the norms of history are universal. They are firm and unfailing, not accidental or haphazard. So long as the world goes on in its normal manner and no basic change is observed in it, the generality and the universality of the laws of history confirms the scientific characteristic of these norms, for the most important feature .of any scientific laws is their being universal and unexceptionable

That is why the following Qur'anic verses lay stress on the universality of the divine :laws

(You will never find a change in the way of Allah. (Surah al-Ahzab, ۳۳: ۶۲

(You will not find a change in our method. (Surah Bani Isra'il, ۱۷: ۷۷

These texts specifically tell us of the universality and continuity of the divine laws, accord them a scientific aspect, and denounce those who are tempted to think that :they could be an exception to the laws of history. The Qur'an says

Do you think that you will enter paradise while yet there has not come to you the like of that which came to those who passed away before you? Affliction and adversity befell them and they were badly shaken, till the messenger of Allah and those who believed along with him said: `When

(comes Allah's help?' Now surely Allah's help is nigh. (Surah al-Baqarah, ۲:۲۱۴

This verse refutes those who wished that their position would be exceptional and the laws of history would not be applicable to them. That is why the Qur'an lays stress on the fact that the laws of history are universal and their universality has a scientific characteristic. Hence man should be prepared to face the historical events .intelligently within the framework of these laws

II. The second fact on which the Qur'an lays stress is the divinity of these laws and norms. Historical norms are divine in the sense that they have been appointed by Allah. The Qur'an has described them as Allah's words also. In other words every law .of history is Allah's words. It is a divine rule

In order to promote man's dependence on Allah the Qur'an lays stress on the divinity and the sacred character of the historical norms. Man can enjoy the fruits of nature only with Allah's help. If he wants to enjoy the entire system of the world, he must act according to the natural laws and norms, for Allah operates His power through these .norms which represent His will, wisdom and guidance

Here there is a possibility of some misunderstanding. It may be said if the science of history is divine and has a hidden link, with divine world, it automatically falls outside .the scope of proper study and scientific analysis

In this case the Muslim interpretation of history and its law become

exactly like the divine interpretation of history made by a number of the scholars of theology belonging to scholastic schools of Christianity. Today we are interpreting the laws of history on the basis of their being divine, in the same way in which Augustine .and other Christian thinkers interpreted history

In reply we say that it is true that to accord divine characteristics, to the laws of history will put them beyond the scope of scientific investigation, but in this case it appears that a misunderstanding has cropped up. There is a basic difference between the method of the Qur'an which believes in a hidden link between history and the divine world on the one hand, and the divine interpretation of history made by Christianity on the other. These two concepts have been badly mixed up. They must :be kept separate from each other. The basic difference between the two is as under

Christianity accords every historical event a hidden and divine aspect and wants to interpret it superhumanly. It attributes the entire event to God and does not accept that it has any connection with any other event. It severs its relation with all other historical events so that it may be attributed to God alone. Christianity does not want that any event along with other relevant happenings should indicate any divine laws .and norms in respect of that event

On the other hand, the Qur'an does not accord a hidden aspect to an event to sever its connection with everything else

and attribute it direct to Allah. The Qur'an recognizes the existence of mutual relationship between various historical events in this world, but according to it this relationship is an expression of the wisdom and sagacity of Allah in regard to the .creation and management of this world including the field of historical events

To make this point clear and to illustrate the two points of view in this respect, we can :use the following example

Sometimes a man may say that it rains by the will of Allah. In this case he puts Allah's will in the place of natural causes as if he thinks that rain is a phenomenon which has no connection with any other happening and is directly attributable to Allah. This .explanation of rain is different from its scientific explanation

Accordingly another man may say that the phenomenon of rain requires some cause and it is connected with other natural event. In fact there is a natural cycle of different forms of water. Water evaporates and converts into gas. Gases ascend and form clouds. The clouds gradually come down and with a change in temperature, again convert into liquid and rain. This series of natural events again represents Allah's wisdom and His good management of the affairs of the world, and there is no contradiction between the two explanations, although in the first explanation the mundane causes of the phenomenon have been ignored and the phenomenon has .been attributed direct to Allah

That is why the Qur'an, while according

the norms of history a divine aspect, does not interpret history superhumanly alone. It only lays stress on the fact that the norms of history are not beyond the scope of the power of Allah. Their materialization depends on His will. Laws of nature are the words of Allah, His method and an embodiment of His will and wisdom in the world. They are meant to remind man to be always conscious of his dependence on Allah so that there may exist a close link between science and faith and man may look at .scientific phenomena with the conviction of his faith in Allah

The Qur'an believes in the basicity of the norms of history and does not regard any event as accidental. In many cases it considers even supernatural events to be .subservient to the norms of history and not mere chance happenings

Accordingly even divine help is governed by the laws of history. In other words it is received only in appropriate conditions. In this sensitive spiritual field also the Qur'an insists on basing the interpretation of history on logic, reason and science, and not on unplanned aid. According to this interpretation divine help must be in conformity with .the laws of history

:We have cited before an example of the norms of history in this verse

Do you suppose that you will enter paradise while as yet there has not come to you ?the like of that which came to those who passed before you

Now let us see how

.the Qur'an links divine help with the norms of history

When you sought help of your Lord and He answered you saying: `I will help you with a thousand angels sent consecutively', Allah appointed it as a good tidings so that your hearts thereby might be at rest. Victory comes only by the help of Allah. Allah is (Mighty, Wise. (Surah al-Anfal, ۸: ۹ -۱۰

The Qur'an does not accord divine aspect to historical events to put their divinity in the place of their causative relations and the laws normally applicable to these events. It only wants to combine knowledge and faith to make them a part of Islamic .teachings

III. Freedom of man's will and his choice is the third fact on which the Qur'an has laid .stress in these verses

Emphasis on the freedom of choice, especially in respect of the norms of history is a .question of great significant. We will revert to it later

The question of the norms of history has given rise to a wrong impression that there is a sort of contradiction between man's freedom and the norms of history. It appears that if we accept that existence of the norms of history, we must reject the idea of man's freedom and his having a choice of action. But if we admit that man is a free being having free will and choice, then we cannot accept the existence of the norms .of history and have to deny the existence of any law in this respect

Hence, the Qur'an

wants to prove the existence of the norms of history, it naturally has to fight against this wrong impression also. That is why the Qur'an lays great stress on the fact that .man's will plays the main role in the events which take place in this world

We propose to explain the technique adopted by the Qur'an for establishing harmony between the norms of history and the freedom of man's will. All the verses which throw light on the norms of history imply man's freedom also. Thus the Qur'an has .combined both the aspects of this question

:We will study this point later. For the present it is enough to quote a few verses

Surely Allah does not change the condition of a people unless they change what is in (their hearts. (Surah Ra'd, ١٣:١١

If they keep on treading the right path, we shall give them abundant water to drink. ((Surah al-Jinn, ٧٢: ١۶

We destroyed these townships when they did wrong, and We appointed a fixed time (for their destruction. (Surah al-Kahf, ١٨: ۵٩

It may be observed that the norms of history are not beyond the reach of man. They are actually subservient to him. Allah has empowered man himself to carry out any desired change in his life. Whenever a nation pursues the right path. Allah makes its life prosperous. The norms of history provide positive opportunities to man to show .his freedom of choice

One gets these positive opportunities by following the laws of history and taking the appropriate action as required

by them. To secure the desired results, it is necessary to have knowledge of the laws .of history

Therefore the question of man's choice plays the basic role in the scheme laid out by the Qur'an with regard to Islamic laws and norms. As we will show, the norms of history mentioned by the Qur'an have a scientific characteristic. They are a .manifestation of Allah's wisdom and good management in the field of history

At the same time they have a human characteristic also, for it is not possible that man should not have a positive role with regard to them, or his will and choice should not influence them. The Qur'an, in fact, lays stress on man's profound responsibility in the .field of historical events

Domain of the Norms of History

We have mentioned three distinguishing features of the norms of history which we deduced from the Qur'an. Now let us see in which sphere these norms operate and to .which events their laws apply

So far we have briefly said that historical events are the sphere in which these norms operate. But the question is whether the norms of history apply to all historical events or only to a particular section of them. In other words, does that part of historical events which is influenced by the norms of history and has laws different from those of physics, physiology, biology and cosmology laws, extend to all fields of historical ?events or do these laws govern only a particular section of historical events

In this connection we must know first what is meant by the field of history or the scene of history. The field of history means the field which covers all historical events .and happenings as mentioned by the historians in their books

Hence the above question may be reconstituted in this way: Are all those events which are collected and compiled by the historians and inserted in their books, governed by those laws of history, which are different from all other laws operating in ?this world? Or do the laws of history apply to only a particular section of these events

The fact is that only a particular section of the historical events fall within the purview of the norms of history. There are many events which fall outside the scope of these norms, and are governed by physical, chemical, physiological or some other laws .operating in the various fields of this world

For example the death of Abu Talib (father of Imam Ali) and Lady Khadijah (the beloved wife of the Holy Prophet) in one particular year is an important historical event, which has been described by the historians touchingly. In fact it is a historical .event which can be studied from various angels, as it had important consequences

But still it does not fall within the domain of the norms of history. This event pertains to the domain of the laws of physiology. The biological laws required that Abu Talib .and Khadijah die in a particular year

This event comes within working

scope of the historians, but the law which governs it is the law of the physiology of the .bodies of Abu Talib and Khadijah. It is biological laws which cause illness and senility

The life of the Third Caliph, Uthman bin Affan and his old age are historical events. It is also a historical event that he lived for eighty long years. Evidently this historical event had an impact on history. Had this Caliph died a natural death before the revolution took place, history might have been different. In that case Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, might have become the Caliph without all that uproar and without any opposition. But the physiological laws of Uthman's body demanded that he should .continue to live till he was killed by the revolutionary Muslims

This event has drawn the attention of the historians and has made a profound impact on the course of history. It has historical depth and its positive or negative role in shaping other historical events is evident. But this event was not governed by the laws of history. It was Uthman's physical strength which enabled him to live up to the age .of eighty

Uthman's position and his actions fall within the scope of historical norms. But his age is a different matter. It is a biological, a physiological and a physical question, but not a .question governed by the laws of history

Thus the norms of history do not apply to every historical scene. For example, all the

events narrated by Tabari in his book are not governed by the laws of history. There is only a particular field where these laws are applicable. We will further elucidate this .point later

Field in which norms of History Operate

Role of Final Cause in the Science of History

The scenes and stages of history which draw the attention of the historians cannot include all happenings or all aspects of historical events. In this world there are many physical, biological or physiological phenomena which are beyond the limits of the .historical field. These phenomena have their own appropriate laws

Some of them are of vital importance from the viewpoint of the historians and have retained their significance even after the passage of hundreds of years. But still they do not fall within the scope of the norms of history and are governed by other laws .and norms

All the phenomena which fall within the scope of the norms of history have one distinguishing feature which does not exist in the case of the other phenomena of the world. Every phenomenon in life and nature is governed by the causative system and comes into being as the result of a sequence of causes and effects. This sequence .exists everywhere in this world

For example, we take into consideration the case of the boiling of water in a kettle. It is a natural phenomenon which depends on certain conditions such as a particular degree of temperature and the nearness of the kettle to fire to a particular extent. This is the case of a sequence of a cause

.and its effect and a relationship of the present and the past in prearranged conditions

But there exist some phenomena in the field of history which have a different type of relationship. They are linked to their objects. In their case an action aims at achieving a certain object, and in the terminology of the philosophers, besides the causative agent there exists a final and real cause also. Such relationships do not exist in every .case

When water boils as the result of heat, its past and the cause of the boiling are there, but the consequence of the boiling is not being visualized, except when boiling is done by human action. When a person performs an act with an objective in his mind, his act besides having a relationship with its cause and with its past, also has a relationship with that objective, which does not exist at the time of the performance of the act and .which can materialize only subsequently

Hence this relationship is the relationship of the future, not of the past. This is true of all cases in which an act is related to its objective. Any historical act performed with a future objective in view and governed by the laws of history is a purposive act related .to its final cause, that is its objective

This objective may be good or bad, beneficial or harmful. On this basis an active historical movement in the domain of historical norms should be purposive and responsible. In

relation to an action its objective has a future-looking aspect. It influences man .because it exists in his mind

Otherwise as far as its external existence is concerned, it is no more than a wish for the future. As it has no real existence, it is its mental existence that induces man to .make efforts and take action

Thus the future objective or the goal for which man makes an effort initiates and promotes his activity through its mental existence. Man can form in his mind a vivid .picture of his goal with all its characteristics and conditions

Now as we have found out a distinguishing feature of historical phenomena, or rather one of their characteristics which does not exist in the case of any other phenomena in the world of nature, we find that every action in the field of history is related to its .objective, which is its final cause as well as its rationale

In other words, this distinguishing feature consists in the role of the final cause in the action. In fact it is the mental existence of its final cause which motivates the action and mentally lays down its guide-lines, which form the relevant norms of history. The norms of history apply only to those actions which are purposive and have a goal .besides being linked with other natural phenomena in a sequence of cause and effect

It must be understood that every purposive act is not a historical act and hence every purposive act is not governed

by the laws of history. To enter into the domain of the norms of history an act must have besides the dimensions of a cause and a goal, a third dimension also. This .dimension must have a social aspect

In other words, the act in question should affect society as a whole and the person who performs it should be a member of that society. It makes no difference whether the effect of the act is comparatively limited or extensive, but it must go beyond the .individual level

A man eats when he feels hungry, drinks when he feels thirsty and sleeps when he gets sleepy. But these acts, though purposive and performed to achieve certain objects, are individual acts, the effect of which does not go beyond a particular individual. In contrast the effect of a social act performed by a person having .reciprocal relations with other members of his society, goes beyond his person

For example the effect of the activity of a merchant, who performs a commercial transaction, of a commander who conducts a battle, of a statesman who concludes a political agreement and of a scholar who advances a theory about the world and life, goes beyond the person of those who perform these acts and influence the whole .society

Hence, taking inspiration from the terminology of the philosophers we may say: The difference between the philosophical terms of active cause, final cause and material cause, used by Aristotle has been a subject of frequent discussion among

the philosophers. The above concept can be explained by means of these terms: The .material cause of a historical act is society, for it provides ground for the act

A historical act must affect society or a nation as a whole although the act in itself may be performed by one or only a few individuals. That is why a historical act governed by the laws of history is that act which is purposive and at the same time its effect goes beyond the individual level. Society being its material cause, such an act becomes a .collective act of society as a whole

The Qur'an Differentiates Between Individual and Collective Acts

The Qur'an distinguishes between an individual act and a collective act. Besides mentioning the deed-sheets in general, it mentions the deed-sheets which record the deeds of the individuals and the deed-sheets which record the deeds of a community or the nation as a whole. This is a way of making a fine distinction between the act of an individual and the collective act attributable to the whole society or the whole nation, a distinction between a three-dimension act and an act which does not .possess more than two dimensions

A two-dimension act has an active cause and a material cause only. Such an act is recorded in the deed-sheet of the individual concerned only. But a three-dimension act besides having an active cause and a material cause also has a final cause. It is, .therefore, recorded in the deed-sheet of the individual as well as society

On the Day of

Resurrection society will not only be confronted with its deed-sheet, but will also be :called to render an account of its deeds. The Qur'an says

You will see each nation crouching, each nation summoned to its record. (It will be said to them): `This day you are requited what you used to do. This Our Book pronounces against you with truth. We were recording what you were doing.' (Surah (al-Jathiyah, ۴۵:۲۸ - ۲۹

Here the Qur'an speaks of the deeds of a community, that will be crouching before Allah, while the details of what they did as a community in this world will be read out to :them. How well the Qur'an has said

.'We were recording what you were doing`

A collective deed-sheet is not the History of Tabari so that it should record all natural, physiological and physical events. It is a recorded reaction of the deeds of the individuals performed by them as a community or a nation. Such acts are purposive acts performed at least with the tacit consent of the community as a whole. That is .why the whole community becomes accountable for them

All this was about the deed-sheets of collective acts, as is clear from another verse :which says

Every man's deed-sheet We have fastened to his own neck, and We shall bring forth for him on the Day o f Resurrection a book (deed-sheet), which he will find wide open. (It will be said to him): `Read your book. You yourself are enough as reckoner

(against you this day.' (Surah Bani Isra'il, ۱۷:۱۳

According to this verse on the Day of Resurrection, each individual will have a separate case. Every one will be confronted with his own deed-sheet, containing all his big and small deeds, whether good or bad. No error, no slip and no accomplishment will be left out. This deed-sheet has been compiled by Him who .knows even the tiniest things in the heavens and the earth

Every man some time or other wants to conceal his weak points. He wants to conceal his sins. He does not want his neighbours, his relatives, his children or the members of his community to know all that he has been doing. He wants to conceal certain things even from himself. He deceives himself and pretends not to have committed any sin. But nothing will be left out in his deed-sheet. On the Day of Reckoning it will be said to :him

Be your own reckoner, for you will find in your deed-sheet all the deeds that you" have committed. Today you will be treated as the principle of justice demands. Today ".no one can hide a truth

In the above verses the deed-sheet of an individual and the deed-sheet of a nation have been mentioned separately. At one place we find a nation crouching before Allah, and at another place we see that every individual has his own personal deed .sheet fastened to his neck

The distinction which the Qur'an has made between the deed-sheet of an individual

and the deed sheet of a nation, is another way of expressing what we have said earlier to the effect that a historical act is that which forms an item of the deed-sheet .of a nation

Such an act has three dimensions. Not only the individuals and the nation will be given separate deed-sheets, but they will also be summoned separately. There will be two different appearances before Allah, one for the individuals and the other for the .nations. In individual appearance all men will be brought before Allah one by one

None will have any friend to help him at that time. All that will be helpful to a person is his own good deeds, pure heart and his faith in Allah, the angels, the revealed Books and the Prophets. This was the account of the individual appearance. In this aspect :the Qur'an says

There is none in the heavens and the earth, but comes to the Beneficient as a slave. Surely He knows them and numbers them with right numbering. And each one o f (them will come to Him on the Day o f Resurrection alone. (Surah Maryam, ۱۹: ۹۳-۹۵

There will be another appearance when the individuals will appear collectively, as .whole nations will be summoned before Allah

Therefore as there exist two kinds of deeds-sheets, there will be two separate :appearances. The verse

.You will see each nation crouching, each nation summoned to its record

.Refers to the collective appearance

It appears from the context of these verses

that this second appearance will be for the purpose of reconciling the past relations of the nations to the requirements of justice and law. These relations have often been contrary to justice and fairplay. For example, among a people there might be an underprivileged person quite fit to be at the helm of affairs. All such wrongs will be .redressed

The Qur'an has called the day on which all this will happen the day of Taghabun or the day of disillusion. How will this disillusion take place? When all people will get together, each one of them will be feeling that in his worldly life he was cheated by his society. One that day when nothing but truth will be accepted. Each one will be compensated :for the wrong done to him. The Qur'an says

The day when He shall gather you for the Day of Assembling, that will be a day of (mutual disillusion. (Surah al-Taghabun, ۶۴: ۹

In short, there exist two types of deed-sheets: (i) Individual deed-sheets which deal with the individual deeds and (ii) Collective deed-sheets showing the deeds of each .nation

As mentioned earlier, an act of a nation is a three-dimensional act. The first dimension is provided by the doer, who is called the active cause by Aristotle. The second dimension is provided by the objective which the doer has in his mind. Aristotle has named it final cause. The third dimension is provided by the field of the action and the extent of its effect, is

known as the material cause. The laws of history apply only to a three-dimension act. .That is true of a collective act only

?Has Society Any Existence Independent of Individuals

It does not behove us to think like some European philosophers that society has an independent and organic existence separate from that of the individuals, and that .individual is nothing but a cell of the independent body that society is

This is how Hegel and some other European philosophers think. They hold that a collective action is separate from and independent of an individual action. These people want to differentiate between collective and individual acts. They say that society is a genuine and organic being, and all individuals are actually squeezed into .the body of this entity

Each individual is just a cell of this body. From within society the individual opens a window for himself to the outside through which he influences society according to his ability and creative power. On this basis every discovery and every new idea represents an outlooking window of this Hegelian unit that society is. Many European philosophers have accepted this fictitious idea as a distinguishing feature of collective action as compared to individual action. But it must be said frankly that this idea is not .correct. We need not indulge in such a baseless and wild fanaticism

We do not believe that society has any conception besides being a collection of the individuals. It is evident that any philosophical discussion of Hegel's theory is beyond the scope of our present discourse, for the discussion

.of his theory about society requires the review of the entire system of his philosophy

All that we want to point out is the incorrectness of his idea. In short, we need not invent a myth to differentiate between an individual act and a collective act, as for the purpose of making a distinction between the two, our explanation about the third dimension is enough. An individual act has only two dimensions. If there is a third dimension also, the act becomes a collective act. Society provides the ground for a .collective act and forms its material cause

In case the act is collective, it is recorded in the deed-sheet of a nation crouching before its Allah. That is the true difference between the two types of acts. As such the conclusion we draw from the foregoing discussion is that the subject of the laws of history is a purposive act having a social background, the effect of which covers .society or the nation as a whole in accordance with its being limited or extensive

Laws of History in the Qur'an

point

Now time has come that we should know the different ways in which the laws of history are mentioned in the Qur'an. In other words, we should see how the laws which, from the viewpoint of the Qur'an, govern history have been expressed by it, .and how has the Qur'an pointed to the norms of history

In the Qur'an we find three forms of the expression of the laws of history. We propose to study each

.of them minutely and to show how they differ from each other

i) The first form in which the Qur'an has mentioned a law of history is that of a) conditional form. When two phenomena or two sets of phenomena are linked together in the realm of history, the Qur'an expresses this link in the form of the two clauses of a conditional sentence indicating that whenever the conditional clause (protoasis) materializes, the concluding clause (apodosis) is also bound to materialize. .This form is applicable to many natural laws and norms also on various levels

For example, when we speak of the law of boiling, we always express this law by means of a conditional sentence. We say that if water as a result of proximity to heat attains a certain degree of temperature (١٠٠°C), it boils because of a special kind of .pressure

This is an example of the relationship between the two clauses of a conditional statement. The phenomenon of the boiling of water appears whenever a certain condition, that is proximity to heat and a particular degree of temperature is fulfilled. Here the natural phenomenon of boiling, which means conversion of water into gas, .has been described in the form of a conditional sentence

This law does not say whether this condition has been fulfilled or not. It merely says that if this particular condition is fulfilled, its consequence inevitably materializes. In other words water must boil at a certain degree of heat. That is what the law of

.a conditional statement tells us

This sort of laws renders great service to man in his ordinary life, and plays, an effective role in his development. With the knowledge of these laws man can take a suitable action in respect of the consequence of a condition. If he needs it, he may take action to fulfill the prerequisite condition, and if he is not interested in it, he can .prevent its fulfillment

If a person is interested in the boiling of water, he should arrange the materialization of the appropriate conditions stipulated in the law of boiling, and if he wants water not .to boil, he should ensure that water is not heated to the boiling point

Hence, a law advanced in the form of a conditional sentence has a constructive value in human life. From the above it also becomes clear that there is a philosophy behind the expression of laws in the form of conditional sentences. Allah has based the system of this world on universal laws and firm norms. He draws man's attention to this firm and compact system of the world so that man may know where he stands in it. Allah tells man about the factors which make or mar his life so that he himself may .be able to meet his due needs properly

If the boiling process of water was to take place accidentally, was not subject to a definite law and did not require heat, man could not control this process, nor would it have

.been possible for him to boil or not to boil water as he wanted

Man acquired this skill when he came to know the definite norms and firm laws of the world. The laws of nature have been put forward to him in the form of conditional .propositions, thus enabling him to see things in light, not in darkness

In the light of the laws of nature he can determine his course of action in regard to the .world

Exactly the same applies to the forms in which the Qur'an enunciates the laws of history. In many cases we find these laws put forward in the form of conditional statements. For this purpose the Qur'an mentions two interconnected social or historical phenomena and says whenever the first phenomenon appears, the second phenomenon is bound to appear. It does not say when the first phenomenon appears .or when it does not

Several of the Qur'anic verses mentioned by us earlier narrate the historical laws in the form of a conditional statement. In this connection the following verse may be :recalled

Allah does not change the condition of a people unless they change what is in their (hearts. (Surah ar-Ra'd, ١٣:١١

Here a law of history has been mentioned, and as we explained earlier and will further explain later, it has been put forward in the form of a conditional statement, for the verse says that there exists an inseparable link between the two different changes, namely a change in man's inner content and a change in his

.external position

Substantially this is a case of conditional statement. The divine law mentioned here virtually says if a people change internally, their material condition and social position are bound to change consequently. Hence divine law has been stated in the form of a .conditional statement

The following verse is another example of a law expressed by means of a conditional :statement

If they continue to tread the right path, we shall give them to drink of water in (abundance. (Surah al Jinn, ۷۲: ۱۶

We have already said that this verse speaks of a law of history, according to which good produce depends on fair distribution. This is a clear case of a conditional .statement

:Another example is provided by the following verse

When We would destroy a township, We send commandment to its people who live at ease, and afterward they commit abomination therein and so the word (of doom) has (effect on it, and We annihilate it with complete annihilation. (Surah Bani Isra'il, ۱۷: ۱۷

In this verse also a historical norm has been stated in the form of a conditional statement. Here two things have been combined, one of them being the direction of the command of Allah to the wicked and those who live at ease and their disobedience of these commandments, and the other being the consequent destruction and .annihilation of such a society

This is another law of history put forward as a conditional statement. The law does not say in which circumstances the condition mentioned in it

is to materialize. It only stipulates that as and when the condition will materialize, the consequent clause of the law is also bound to materialize with it. This is the first form .in which the laws of history have been mentioned in the Qur'an

ii) The second form in which the laws of history have been advanced in the Qur'an is) that of a definite and unqualified statement. In many cases the laws of nature are stated in this way also. When an astronomical prediction is made on the basis of the movement of the planets, such as the prediction about the time of a lunar or a solar .eclipse, no condition is attached to such a statement

In this case a scientific law or a scientific question is put forward as a definite and unconditional statement. Man can in no way influence or modify the conditions and the circumstances of such occurrences. Therefore a prediction about them is made in the form of a definite and unqualified statement without any conditions being .attached to it

When we say that the sun will eclipse on such and such day or say that the moon will eclipse on such and such night. We express a scientific question in the form of a .definite statement and not a conditional statement

In such cases it is not within human power to change the conditions or the circumstances of the matter in question because it is not conditional. When we say that the sun or that

the moon will eclipse, though we speak with reference to the future, we make a firm .statement. The same is true of the weather forecasts based on scientific laws

When it is said that it will rain in such and such area, the statement is firm and .unconditional and forecasts rainfall at a definite place and at a definite time

This is the second form of the expression of the laws of history. While dealing with the .analysis of the social elements we will cite some more examples of it from the Qur'an

This second form of expression of the laws and norms of history has created a wrong impression among the European thinkers, who maintain that historical norms are inconsistent with human freedom, for if it is presumed that they regulate man's life, .he can have no freedom of choice

This wrong idea has led some thinkers to say that in this world man has only a negative role, for he cannot change the norms of history. These thinkers have renounced man's freedom for the sake of historical norms to which they have .attached too much importance

The followers of this way of thinking say that the role which man plays is negative, not positive. Man is like a device which moves as required. We will elaborate this idea .later

Some other thinkers with a view to combine the idea of human freedom and the idea of the apparent existence of the norms of history, maintain that it is man's power of choice alone which

establishes the norms of history. The historical laws are in fact subject to man's will. .Hence we need not sacrifice man's freedom for the sake of historical laws

On the other hand it may be said that man's freedom and his power of choice is a phenomenon which in its turn is itself a part of the norms of history. In this case also .though man's freedom is affected, yet in a concealed manner

Some believe that the laws of history should be rejected altogether in the interest of human freedom. A number of European scholars are of the opinion that to maintain man's freedom the scene of history should be kept outside the purview of the universal laws and it should be maintained that no special laws are applicable to the field of history. This, they say, is necessary to promote man's free choice in respect of .his activities

All these points of view are largely incorrect, as they are based on the wrong idea of the existence of a basic contradiction between the laws of history and man's freedom. What is the source of this misunderstanding? The misunderstanding has arisen from the fact that the scholars having this wrong notion are under the impression that the laws of history are always and invariably expressed in the form of a verbal statement .having the import of certainty

Had it been so really and had we believed that in the presence of the laws of history no scope was left for human

effort and initiative, their contention would, of cause, have been correct to refute their wrong impression it is enough to refer back to the first form of the laws of history, .that is the form of a conditional statement

In the conditional statements which we have quoted from the Qur'an, the main condition mostly refers to man's will, his choice and the relation between the conditional clause and the consequent clause. It may be observed that the conditional .clause invariably implies man's effort and his work

:For example take the Qur'anic verse which says

Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in their .hearts

In this verse it has been specifically stated that the change in the condition of people depends on their own deeds. They themselves can bring about a change if they so want. When a law of history is mentioned in the language of a conditional statement, and the stipulated condition directly relates to man's will and choice, then the law of .history itself necessitates the existence of man's free will and his choice

It gives man freedom of action so that he may change his condition. It is knowledge of a natural law, such as the law of the boiling of water enhances his power, for when he .knows under what conditions water boils, he can boil it at his will

In this way the laws of history in the form of conditional statements are not only not inconsistant with man's

freedom and will, but in contrast they lay stress on these qualities. They also explain the results of man's actions so that he may take the proper course leading to the .desired results. This was the second form of the laws of history

iii) The third form of the laws of history to which the Qur'an has given special) attention, relates to the laws which are not firmly resolute and unbreakable, but imply .only a sort of natural tendency of human history

Obviously there is a difference between a tendency and a firm law. For further clarification, let us conceive the idea of a law. Our normal conception of a scientific law is that of a humanly unbreakable norm, for we know that man cannot violate or evade .natural laws

It is within man's power not to offer prayers, for to offer prayers is a duty prescribed by Islamic law, and not a law of creation or a universal law. Similarly one can take alcoholic drinks, for prohibition of intoxicants is a rule of Islamic law, not a law of .creation. In contrast man can never violate universal laws and norms

For example, it is not possible to make water not to boil or to delay it's boiling a single moment in spite of the presence of all the conditions necessary for its boiling, for the .law of boiling is inescapable and cannot be evaded

Normally we have this concept of a law and it is correct to a certain extent. But it

is not necessary that every natural law should be so inflexible and unbreakable. We have a number of natural tendencies, which though effective in the natural development of history and man, are not rigid enough and can be resisted. But still they cannot be resisted or violated for long. You cannot put off boiling of water for a .single moment, but there are tendencies which can be contained for quite a long time

We do not mean to say that on account of their having a different character, these tendencies do not influence the movement of history. These tendencies being flexible, can be resisted and violated, though according to the norms of history they may in the .long run gradually crush all those who opposes them

From there it may be said that there are some tendencies which may safely be resisted with impunity, but there are some others which can be resisted only for a short time, and then they crush him who fights against them in contravention of the laws of history. This has been a characteristic of genuine human tendencies and .drives all over history

Conjugal Drive is a Historical Norm

To make the point clear we can say that there are human drives which are effective in man's birth and his constitution. These tendencies and drives have a concrete reality and are not merely a legal matter. Marriage and conjugal ties are meant for creating .special relations between man and woman in human society

These tendencies should not be regarded as merely a legal

formality. In contrast they are a genuine drive which has come into existence for man's development and should not be considered to be merely a legal act or a religious command. This drive is deep-rooted in man's nature and is a part of human constitution. It attracts man to the opposite sex for the purpose of the survival of .human race by means of creating a particular social set-up called marriage

This tendency or a drive in itself is a genuine norm, not a mere legal form, and that is why it can be resisted for a short period only. The example of many people shows the possibility of ignoring the natural law of normal conjugal relations for a while. In contrast, it is not possible for anyone to stop the operation of the law of boiling for any .length of time

A society which plays with the divine laws of nature signs its death warrant with its own hand, for a deviation from natural tendencies involves it into so many perversions and consequently leads it to devastation and annihilation. That is why we said that it was possible to violate these laws for a limited period, but it was not possible to ignore them for long, for the violation of these laws leads the defaulters to .annihilation

Natural Need of Man and Woman to Behave Differently

The tendency that man and woman should have two different sets of duties and should behave differently is a plan designed by nature and not a mere legal provision. It is a natural tendency

of man and woman and not a decision imposed on them from outside. But still this .tendency can be resisted

A law may be enacted to the effect that it is man's duty to stay at home to nurse and rear children and that woman must go out to earn livelihood and undertake external activities. By the enforcement of such a law the tendency of the natural division of duties between man and woman can be resisted, but such an arrangement being contrary to the norms of history and the natural genius of man and woman, cannot .last forever

By the enforcement of such a law society will lose woman's special talent for nursing the children, her spirit of motherly love and her aptitude for being patient in the face of the hardships and difficulties unbearable to men. This law appears to be exactly like entrusting the job of a carpenter working in the construction of a building to a .blacksmith and that of the blacksmith to the carpenter. Such an action is possible

The building in question may get erected, but it cannot last long, and with the passage of time is bound to collapse before long as the result of the contravention of historical norms. The resistance of a natural urge which is the basis of man's development will pull him down. Though the resistance of a natural urge is possible for a short time, its .reaction will appear sooner or later

Religiousness is a Historical Norm

The most important example of historical norms is

religion itself. It is also one of the historical norms and not a mere legal provision. We can define religion in two ways. It can be introduced as a divine legislation called in the terminology of scholastic jurisprudence - the divine will of law-giving. The Qur'an :says

He has ordained for you that religion which He commanded to Nuh (Noah) and that which We revealed to you and that which We commanded to Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus), saying: 'Establish the religion and be not divided therein. Dreadful for the idolaters is that to which you call them.' (Surah al-Shura, (۴۲:۱۳

In this verse religion has been described as a law given by Allah. But at another place .it has been described as a law rooted in man's own nature and structure

Set your face to religion as a man upright by nature - the nature framed by Allah, in which He has created man. There is no altering of Allah's creation. That is the right (religion, but most men know not. (Surah al-Rum, ۳۰:۳۰

In this verse religion has been described not only as a law ordained and imposed on man from above, but also as a part of his divine nature which can never be changed. .This verse simply makes a statement and does not prescribe any rule of law

It says that man has been so created that religion is a part of his nature, and that the divine creation cannot be altered. Religion cannot be detached from

man as no other part of his body can be detached from him. Religion is not a cultural matter acquired by man over history. It being a part of man's divine nature, he cannot .dispense with it

Religion is a part of the nature in which Allah has created man and Allah's creation is unalterable. Should religion be alterable, it would become a thing acquired by man in .the course of his cultural and social development over history

The Qur'an wants to say that religion is not a thing which may either be accepted or rejected by man. It is a part of his nature which Allah has framed and which is .unalterable

'There is no altering of the creation o f Allah`

is an indicative, not an imperative expression. It only makes a factual statement when it says that religion is a divine creation and as such is unalterable. So long man is man, .religion is a divine norm for him

There is a difference between this norm and other norms, for this norm is not as irresistible and rigid as the law of boiling. This norm can be resisted for a short time in the same way as the law of marriage and the urge of natural relations between man and woman can be resisted. It is possible to withstand marriage by indulging into .sexual perversion, but that can be done only for a short time

Similarly for a short time religiousness also can be resisted, but it is not possible

.to deny religion and ignore this big truth forever

For a short time man can close his eyes and refuse to see the sun. Similarly he can refrain from seeing the religious truth, but he can do so only for a short time, and those who reject religion are punished before long. Here we do not mean that punishment which would be meted out to the wrong-doers by the angels on the Day of Judgement, nor do we mean that punishment which is awarded to the criminals by .the police

In this case the retribution ensues from the laws of history themselves. This punishment descends on those who want to change the unchangeable creation of :Allah. The Qur'an says

They ask you to hasten the punishment. Surely Allah never fails His promise, but a day (with Allah is as a thousand years of what you reckon. (Surah al-Hajj, ۲۲:۴۷

We say that a man who fights against the third form of the laws of history, is before long afflicted with retribution and according to the norms of history receives punishment very soon. Here the phrase `very soon' should be taken to signify .historical quickness and not what we understand of it in our ordinary life

This is the point which has been mentioned in the above verse in regard to the punishment to be meted out to the idolaters. This verse first mentions the punishment .which descended on the lands of the wrongdoers of the past

Then it says that the pagans are

asking the Holy Prophet to hasten the punishment promised to them, and saying: Where is that punishment? When will it come? We have not received is so far although we don't believe in you, fight against you, and have closed our ears to your ?Qur'an. Then why are we not punished

Length of One Day in the Terminology of the Laws of History

In the above-mentioned verse the Qur'an speaks of historical quickness which is :different from ordinary quickness. The verse says

They ask you to hasten the punishment. Surely Allah never fails His promise, (for the" historical norms are firm and stable), but a day with Allah is as a thousand years of " .what you reckon

The length of one day for the purpose of the laws of history by the reckoning of Allah is ۱۰۰۰ ordinary years. As we explained earlier, when the Qur'an speaks of

,"The words o f Allah"

means the laws and the norms of history, and in the words of Allah the minimum length of a day is measured equal to that of ۱۰۰۰ years. As you know there is another verse in which one day has been described to be equal to ۵۰,۰۰۰ years. In that verse the day refers to the day of judgement and not to a day of this world. That is how the two verses are reconciled. The verse in question is as under:

The angels and the Holy Spirit ascend to Him in a day whereof the span is fifty thousand years. So be patient gracefully. They behold that day far

off, while we behold it nigh: the day when the sky will become as molten copper. ((Surah al-Ma'arij, ۷۰:۴-۸

Here the Day refers to the Day of Judgement, for it is on that day only that the sky will become as molten copper. The Day of Judgement is estimated to be as long as ۵۰,۰۰۰ years. As for the previous verse, that spoke of the day of collective punishment, which was fixed according to the norms of history. In that case

." a day with Allah is as ۱۰۰۰ years of what you reckon"

In short, the third form of the laws of history consists of man's inner tendencies and his drives which are a part of his structure and which influence history. These drives .can be resisted, but only for a short time, not for a long period

But one thing is to be noted. The length of time should not be reckoned as we normally do in our ordinary life. One day in the `words of Allah' and for the purpose of .divine norms is as ۱۰۰۰ years of what we ordinarily reckon

Religion is the best and the most important example of the third form of the laws of history. Religion is a historical norm. What is the role of religion? What is its source? Why is it not a matter of mere enacting a law? Is it exactly as natural as the law of ?marriage between a man and a woman? If so, why and how

To answer these questions

and to know for certain that religion is a norm of history, it is necessary to analyse the elements forming society in the light of the Qur'an. Now the question is how to analyse society? In our opinion it should be analysed in the light of the following verse:

When your Lord said to the angels: `I am placing in the earth a vicegerent', they said: `Will You put there one who will make there mischief and will shed blood, while we proclaim Your praise and glorify You?' He said: `I know what you do not know.' (Surah al-Baqarah, ٢:٣٠)

This verse provides us with the finest, the deepest and the most exact points to analyse society. We are going to analyse these points and make a comparative study of them so that in the end we may be able to ascertain how religion is one of the norms of history.

Analysis of Social Elements ١

We have said that to explain the fact that religion is one of the norms of history, it is necessary to analyse the elements forming society so that we may know what these elements are and in what forms and norms they are combined. To answer these questions we have chosen the following Qur'anic verse

When your Lord said to the angels: `I am placing in the earth a vicegerent,' they said: `Will You put there one who will make there mischief and will shed blood, while we proclaim Your praise and glorify You?' (Surah al-Baqarah, ٢:٣٠)

When we study this verse,

we observe that Allah informs the angels that He has laid the foundation of a society on the earth. We naturally want to know what elements form this society. From the expressions used in this verse by the Qur'an the following three main elements can be derived

i) Man)

:ii) Earth or nature as a whole as indicated by the words)

." I am placing a vicegerent in the earth"

Here the second element is the earth or nature as a whole, the first element being .man whom Allah has appointed His vicegerent in the earth

iii) The third element is a mental bond which binds man to the earth or nature on the) one hand and to other fellow human beings on the other. This bond has been called by the Qur'an vicegerency. These are the three elements which form society on the ,earth: (i) man, (ii) nature

iii) Vicegerency - the bond which binds man to the earth and to his fellow human) .beings

When we look at human societies, we find that the first two elements are common to all of them. You cannot find a single society in which man may not be living with his fellow beings, or not living on the earth or not having a contact with nature in order to .play his role

As far as these two elements are concerned, all societies are alike. But as for the third element, each society has its own variety of bond. Societies, in other words, differ in the nature and

.the form of the bond which they have

Thus the third element, that is the element of a mental bond is changeable and it differs from society to society. Every society operates it differently. This bond can be expressed in two ways. According to one way of expression it has four sides and .according to the other three only

The four-sided relationship is that which binds man and nature with other men. Here also we have three clear sides, namely nature, man and the bond existing between man and nature on the one hand and between man and his fellow human beings on the other. If we presume that there is a fourth side also, even then prima facie there will be three sides only, the fourth side being outside the social frame and not a part of .society

Anyhow, the expression that this relationship has four sides makes it necessary that the fourth side also should be regarded as one of the fundamental factors of social relations. That is what is meant by the Qur'an when it gives the name of vicegerency .to the four social dimensions

From the viewpoint of the Qur'an vicegerency is a social relationship. If we study and analyse it, we can say that it has four elements, for vicegerency necessitates the :existence of

,i) One who appoints the vicegerent)

,ii) The things in respect of which the vicegerent is appointed)

.iii) The vicegerent himself)

In this case the vicegerent is man. The things in respect of which he has been appointed

vicegerent, are the earth and all that exists on the face of it, including the human beings. Thus besides man and his relation with his fellow men and nature, the fourth side necessary for the materialization of vicegerency is Allah, Who appoints the vicegerent. As such the social relationship of vicegerency consists of the following :four sides

.i) The one who appointed the vicegerent, that is Allah; (ii) The vicegerent, that is man)

iii) and (iv) That which has been put under the charge of the vicegerent, that is nature) .and human beings

As a result of his monotheistic conception of the world, man acquires a special outlook on the life and the universe. It is with this outlook that he says: There is no deity and no lord of the world and life but Allah, and that man has to play no role in his life except that of the vicegerent, for Allah has appointed him His deputy on the earth and .has assigned to him the position of leadership

Man's relation with nature is not that of the owner and the owned. In fact the relation between them is that of the trustee and the trust. Irrespective of their social position one man's relation with his fellow man is that of the two colleagues performing the same duty of the vicegerent of Allah, and not that of the master and the slave, nor that of master and the servant. This description of the four sides of the social relationship of vicegerency to

.which the Qur'an has referred, is closely related to the conception of cosmos in Islam

In contrast to this Qur'anic conception, there is another idea of a three-sided relationship which links up man with his fellow beings and nature but rejects the fourth side (Allah) and makes this social relationship devoid of its fourth dimension. As a result of ignoring the fourth dimension the whole relationship is upset and the entire .social structure changes

Man's lordship over his fellow beings resulting from overlooking the fourth dimension and regarding man alone as the source of all values, has appeared in various forms over history. Different forms of ownership and varying degrees of man's domination .over other men have manifested themselves on the scene and stage of life

If we minutely compare these two relationships with each other and make a comparative study of the four-sided relationship (man + nature + relation between man and nature + Allah) and the three-sided relationship (man + nature + relation between man and nature), we will observe that the addition of the fourth side is not merely a numerical question, but this addition brings about a fundamental change in .the basis of social relations and the structure of the other three sides

Therefore the addition of the fourth side should not be regarded as merely a numerical addition. In fact this addition gives the other three sides a new spirit and a fresh significance, and brings about a basic change in the mutual relationship of the .four sides

In

fact the addition of the fourth side changes the whole structure of the social relations. Therefore in regard to social relations we can act either according to the system of .the four-sided relationship or according to the system of the three-sided relationship

The Qur'an believes in the four-sided relationship only, as can be inferred from the above quoted verse, for man's appointment as the vicegerent of Allah amounts to the .confirmation of the four-sided social relationship

The Qur'an not only believes in it, but also regards it as one of the norms of history. As we have seen in a previously quoted verse, the Qur'an regards religion as a norm of history. The four-sided social relationship being nothing but an application of religion .to life, it is one of the historical norms. Now let us see how it can be so

The Qur'an presents this relationship in two ways: Sometimes it describes it as a Divine act because vicegerency is Allah's favour bestowed on His creation. The Qur'an :expresses it thus

".am about to place a vicegerent in the earth ١"

In this verse the four-sided relationship has been described as Allah's favour to man and Allah's positive role in it, has been stressed. Sometimes the same four-sided relationship is advanced from another angle. In the following verse it has been :declared that this relationship has been accepted by man himself

We offered the trust (vicegerency of Allah) to the heavens and the earth and the hills, but they shrank from bearing

it and were afraid of it. And man assumed it. Surely he has proved a tyrant and a fool. ((Surah al-Ahzab, ۳۳:۷۲

The trust referred to in this verse is the same as the vicegerency. This high position was granted by Allah to man who accepted it. The acceptance of the trust means that man was chosen by Allah to be His vicegerent and deputy, and he accepted that heavy responsibility. This responsibility is the same as the four-۶ided relationship. It is sometimes observed from the angle of the bestower of this favour. In this case it is :said

;"Iam about to place a vicegerent in the earth"

sometimes it is observed from the angle of the acceptor of this responsibility. Then it :is said

" .. . . We offered the trust to the heavens, the earth and the hills"

This trust which was offered to man and which he accepted was not, according to our interpretation, some kind of duty to be discharged or some order to be obeyed, for the same trust was offered to the hills, to the heavens and to the earth also. Evidently a duty and obedience have no meaning in respect of them. That shows that the offer does not mean the enunciation of any law to be observed. What is meant is that this favour of Allah looked everywhere for an object which may be its nature and historical structure be suitable for its application. The hills were not suitable to receive this .favour

The

heavens and the earth were not compatible with the four-sided relationship and could not shoulder the responsibility of this Divine trust, that is the vicegerency of Allah. Hence an offer was made to man, who accepted it in the sense that the four-sided relationship was made a part of his creational structure and his natural and historical .development

Hence this verse refers to a historical norm a norm of the third form which can be resisted and contravened. It is not one of those norms which cannot be resisted even for a short time. It is a part of human nature and one can rise against one's nature at least temporarily. The Qur'an has hinted at this reality, and so after mentioning this :historical norm it adds

" .And man assumed it. Surely he has proved a tyrant and a fool"

By using the expression, 'a tyrant and a fool' the Qur'an has thrown light on the fact that any arrogant and foolish man can withstand this norm and can content with it negatively. We find a similar expression at the end of that verse which describes the :true human nature. In that verse also the Qur'an first says

"... . So set your face to religion as a man by nature upright"

:and then adds

."But most men do not know"

Just as we deduced from the verse of true human nature that religion was a norm of life and a norm of history, from this verse also we can deduce

that the relation between religion and life consists of a four-sided social relationship described by the Qur'an as the trust and the vicegerency. This social relationship also in its Qur'anic sense is a norm of history. In fact both the verses amount to the same :thing. In the first verse the Qur'an says

So set your face to religion as a man by nature upright - the nature framed by Allah in which He has created man. There is no altering o f the laws of Allah's creation. That is (the self-sustaining way. (Surah al-Rum, ۳۰:۳۰

The expression of self-sustaining way has been used to lay stress on the true concept of religion. The Qur'an wants to say that it is religion that forms man's basic nature .and the cornerstone of his history. Religion regulates man's life

The religion has been described as the self-sustaining way because it is religion which acquaints us with the conception of self-sustenance in life. Here self-sustenance is a concise term representing four-sided social relationship at which the two verses, one .mentioning vicegerency and the other mentioning trust hint

Religion is a norm of life and history. It introduces the fourth dimension in life with a view to bring about a basic change in the social set-up, not merely to increase the .number of dimensions

This concept that religion is a norm of history is deducible from the above-quoted two verses of the Qur'an. Now how can we form a more clear and comprehensive picture of this norm

and how can we know the role of vicegerency and the establishment of religion as a norm of history in life? How can the role of the fourth side of the social relationship as a norm of history be accepted? How can religion have had a basic role in man's life ?over history

In order to be able to understand these points we must have the knowledge of the two stable elements of the social relationship. One of these two elements is man and his fellow beings and the other is nature or the universe. We call these two elements stable because they are the part of the three-sided as well as the four-sided relationship. In order to know the role of the fourth side, that is Allah in the structure of man's social relationship, we first must know the role of these two stable elements. ?What is man's role in the process of history

The Qur'an has its own views about man, history and the ways of life. What according to it is man's role in social relations? What is the role of nature in them? How does nature influence the social relationship and how can the role of man and nature be determined? If we study these questions, we can find out the role of the fourth side which is the distinguishing feature of the four-sided relationship as opposed to the .three-sided relationship

This study will show to what extent the role of the fourth side is essential, and

to what extent the law of history and man's own structure make the existence of this element necessary for the formation of man's four-sided social relationship. To understand this law of history it is necessary to look at the role of man and nature in the formation of history from the viewpoint of the Qur'an. We propose to deal with this question later.

Man's Role in the March of History

point

We have said that the discovery of the real dimensions of the role of religion in the march of history and the progress of man depends on the evaluation of the two stable elements of the social relationship which are man and nature.

Now let us see from the viewpoint of the Qur'an about man and his role in the movement of history. In the light of the Qur'anic concepts we studied earlier, it is evident that man or his inner content forms the basis of the movement of history. We have already pointed out that to have an objective is the distinguishing feature of the movement of history.

In other words, the movement of history is a purposive movement. It is not merely related to its past through its cause, but is related to its future as well through its objective. Being a purposive movement, it has a final cause and is forward looking.

It is the future which stimulates the active movement of history. Though the future does not exist at the present time, it is visualized through its mental existence. It is this mental existence

which on the one hand points to an intellectual aspect embracing the objective and on .the other points to the power and will which push man towards this objective

Thus the mental existence of an objective which is to materialize in future and which motivates history, shows on the one hand the existence of an idea and on the other shows the existence of a will. It is the blending of an idea and a will that has the power .to make future and is a force capable of starting historical activity on the social scene

Idea and will in fact form man's conscience, and in these two basic elements man's inner content is seen. It is man's inner content that moves history and with the .blending of man's idea and his will it can realize his objectives

With this explanation it may be said that it is man's inner content or his thinking and will which make history move. The whole structure of society including all its relations, organizations and their characteristics stand on the foundation of man's inner content, and every change and development of society depends on the change and .development of this infrastructure of it

In other words, the structure of society changes with a change in man's ideas and his will. It is obvious that if this base is solid, the structure of society will be strong. The relation between man's inner content and the social and historical superstructure of society is that of a cause and

its effect. This relationship recalls the laws as explained earlier in connection with the :following verse

Allah does not change the condition of a people unless they change that which is in" ".their hearts

This verse says that the social condition of a people is their superstructure. Any fundamental change must appear in the people themselves. All other changes, such as changes in the quality of life, historical condition or social condition spring from this basic change. A

"change in that which is in their hearts"

means a change in the inner content of society as a whole, that is as a community or a nation. Society should be like a plant that always bears new and fresh fruit. A change in one or several individuals in a society cannot lay the foundation of the development .of society as a whole

A change in the conditions and the circumstances of a community or a nation is fostered only by an inner change in that community or that nation which should like a .tree that bears new fruit every day

Hence only a change in the inner and psychological content of a nation which on the whole is represented by the spiritual condition of the majority of that nation, is capable of bringing about any basic changes in the historical character of a nation. A .change in the spirit of one, two or a few individuals cannot do this

Necessity of Harmony between Superstructural and Infrastructural Movements of Society

Islam and the Qur'an believe that the process of inner and outer changes should proceed

side by side so that man may reconstruct his inner faculties, that is his spirit, his thinking, his will and his inclinations. This inner infrastructure should be in complete .harmony with the outer superstructure

As no superstructure can be visualized without an infrastructure and a superstructure without a strong base will be shaky and liable to disappear, Islam has called the proper reconstruction of the inner content, the major jihad (Spiritual purification), and .(the reconstruction of its superstructure the minor jihad (Holy war

Drawing a comparison between the two, Islam says that the minor jihad will have no real significance nor will it be able to bring about any change in social and historical .fields, if it is not accompanied by major jihad

Therefore these two processes should go on side by side. Whenever they are separated from each other, they lose their real value. In order to lay stress on the significance of man's inner content and to make clear that this inner content is the .basic thing, Islam has called its reconstruction the major jihad

Whenever the major jihad and the minor jihad are separated from each other, no :useful inner change can take place. Describing such a state the Qur'an says

There is such a man that his view on this worldly life pleases you. He even calls on Allah to vouch for that which is in his heart. Yet he is the deadliest of your opponents. No sooner he leaves you than he tries to make mischief, destroying

(crops and cattle. Allah does not like mischief. (Surah al Baqarah, ۲: ۲۰۴

Man cannot accept truth and act righteously so long as a desire for a change for the better does not have a firm hold on his heart and he does not rebuild himself from within. Society cannot be shaped in a befitting manner unless man's heart is replete with human values representing truth. Otherwise any talk of truth will be hollow and .meaningless

As such, the most important question is that of the change of heart, which accords meaning to the words and a dimension to the mottos, and determines the goal and .the line of action to be adopted to secure it

So far we have learnt that man's inner content is the basis of the movement of .history. It fixes the rules and laws

Importance of Choosing an Ideal in the Life of Man

Now the question is what this inner content of man is. What is the thing that forms the starting point in the construction of this inner content? How can that thing be ?discovered

In fact it is man's ideal that performs this role. It is an ideal that forms man's inner content and moves the wheels of history. It is an ideal that guides the movement of history through a conception which exists in man's mind and is blended with his will and thinking. The objectives which move the wheels of history are organized by an .ideal

We know that man's inner content gives a concrete shape to his objectives and goals on which the movement of

history depends. It gives a practical shape to the movement of history through the mentally existing ideas blended with will and thinking. All the objectives around which history revolves, and which concern entire human society spring from the great ideals. It is a great ideal which brings into existence many small objectives and .specific questions

The objectives or the main goals in life are the sole makers of history. In their turn they have a deep foundation in man's inner content, that is the main ideal of his life. This ideal is the corner stone of all his objectives which reverberate it. The higher and the nobler the ideals of a human society, the more befitting and broader objectives .are

Similarly if its ideals are limited and mean, the objectives springing from them will also be limited and mean. Therefore a great ideal is the starting point of the internal .reconstruction of human society

The main ideal of a society depends on its conception of life and the world. A great ideal is formed in the light of that conception, and society can move to realize that ideal in consonance with the spirit of the ideal in question and the conception that it .holds of the world and life

A great ideal is the outcome of a particular way of thinking and a particular mentality. All those who choose a particular ideal, determine their course of an action in the light of it. This course of action may be described as a

.historical movement

It may be mentioned that all historical movements have some definite aim and are distinguished from each other by the ideal behind them, which determines their objectives and goals. These objectives and goals keep all the efforts and moves which .are mode, concentrated on the course, leads to that ideal

The Qur'an and the religious terminology call such an ideal deity, because it is a high ideal alone which can occupy our full attention and make us comply with all its .requirements

The Qur'an believes that these are the qualities of a deity(۱) only. That is why it describes every big ideal and every force that occupies the place of a big ideal, as deity. It is these deities(۲) which fix the course of history. Lust and licentiousness are :one of these deities. The Qur'an says

(Have you seen him who chooses for his deity his own lust. (Surah al-Furqan, ۲۴: ۴۳

.In this verse excessive lust of a licentious man has been described as his deity

According to the terminology of the Qur'an and the religion the big ideals are so to say Allah, the real Deity who issues injunctions to man and is his true motivating force. If the influence of something else goes to this extent, it socially and religiously may be .called a deity

Different Kinds of Human Ideals

I. The big ideals the conception of which man draws from the externally existing realities of the world and the living conditions and mental disposition of human society, do not lift man's vision beyond the

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(ilah) -۱

(aliha) -۲

.limited affairs of material life

When man's big ideal is inspired by the existing condition of society with all its characteristics and limitations, life begins to move in a circle. In other words, it ceases .to move forward and becomes stagnant

As a result man begins to regard as absolute what he previously regarded as limited and relative. He ceases to have any desire to attain any thing beyond what already exists. He stops making efforts to achieve a higher ideal. In these circumstances the movement of history becomes circular. It does not move forward. The future .becomes only a repetition of the past

The leaders of the limited ideologies do nothing but forestall any change in society. They block the progress of human society by diverting its attention from the absolute :to the relative. Hence, the limited ideologies are chosen for two reasons

The first reason is a sense of attachment to the existing conditions on account of one's becoming accustomed to them, and an aversion to any movement because of one's indolence. From psychological point of view, the development of such a state in .society prevents it from moving forward and making progress

Consequently society carves a god (deity) out of a relative truth which it could use as a stepping-stone for reaching its goal. It begins to look at a relative truth as the absolute truth and chooses it as its supreme ideal and the highest goal. This means nothing but blindly following in the footsteps of others which has

been denounced by the Qur'an in many of its verses describing the societies which the .Prophets had to face

These societies believed that their rulers were the supreme ideals. They passed all limits in elevating their rulers, and overlooking the relativity of them, tried to make them the absolute. The Prophets had to face the people who on account of their :perverted habits, customs and manners, rejected their call and said

We found our fathers following a path. We are guided by their footprints. (Surah al-Zukhruf, ۴۳:۲۲)

Materialism prevailed over their minds and hence they went after perceptible objects only. Materialism so much overwhelmed their feelings that instead of being the thinking men they became material beings of very limited thinking. A man, who is engrossed in his daily needs, is always under the influence of material things and cannot see beyond the daily happenings and the material affairs. He cannot rise :above these things. See what the Qur'an says about such people

They say: `We follow that wherein we found our fathers.' What! Even though their fathers were totally unintelligent and had no guidance. (Surah al-Baqarah, ۲:۱۷۰)

They say: 'Enough for us is that wherein we found our fathers.' What! Even though their fathers had no knowledge whatsoever and no guidance. (Surah al-Maidah, ۵:۱۰۳)

They said: 'Have you come to us to pervert us from that faith in which we found our fathers so that you may own the place of greatness in the land? We will not believe you.' (Surah Yunus, ۱۰: ۷۸)

Do

you ask us not to worship what our fathers worshipped? Surely we are in grave doubt (concerning that to which you call us. (Surah Hud, ۱۱:۶۲

Their messengers said: 'Can there be doubt concerning Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth? He calls you so that He may forgive you your sins and reprieve you to an appointed term.' They said: 'You are no more than human being like us. You want to turn us away from what our fathers used to worship. Then bring (us some convincing proof.' (Surah Ibrahim, ۱۴:۱۰

They say only: `We found our fathers following a path and we are guided by their (footprints. (Surah Az-Zukhruf, ۴۳:۲۲

In all these verses the Qur'an has declared the choice of an inferior ideal as the first cause of the rejection of the call of the Prophets by the perverted societies. It explains that primarily because of their materialistic views and intellectual vacuum, these societies were unable to choose a better ideal and were contented with an inferior .one

The second cause of the choice of inferior ideals all over history has been the fiendish domination of the tyrants over human societies. When the tyrants come to power in society, they become allergic to every forward-looking idea and do not Ike that anyone should be regarded as superior to them. They always consider such things to .be a threat to their status and existence

That is why all over history it has been in the interest of the tyrants to close

the eyes of their people to the realities. They wanted their people to regard the inferior condition of their life as an ideal and indispensable one, and to attach god-like .and absolute value to the existing condition

The tyrants try to imprison the people within the framework of their own ideas. They want the people to mould themselves according to their existing condition, not to have any idea beyond that and not to think of changing their existing condition by choosing a better ideal or having a higher ambition. That is the social cause of choosing inferior ideals. This cause is introduced from outside and is not an internal one. The Qur'an has referred to this method of sabotaging the mission of the :Prophets when it says

Fir'awn said: Chiefs, ١ know not that you have a god other than me. " (Surah al Qasas, (٢٨:٣٨

Fir'awn said: `I only show you what ١ think and I do but guide you to a wise policy. ((Surah al Hijr, ١٥:٢٩

Here Fir'awn admits that he presents to his people nothing except his own personal views and that he wants to place them within the framework of his own personal opinion. Thus he admits that he wants to make the status quo and his personal views .absolute and indispensable

It is pharaonic authority which makes an ideal imposed on a society appear to it to be indispensable and absolute, and forces society to accept it as such. The pharaonic authority regards any change in this

:policy as a threat to its existence. Listen to what the Qur'an says in this respect

We sent Musa and his brother Haroon with our signs and a clear warrant to Fir`awn and his chiefs, but they scorned them as they were a despotic folk. And they said: `Shall we put our faith in two human beings like ourselves, and whose people are (servile to us?' (Surah al Mu'minun ۲۳:۴۵- ۴۷

Fir'awn means to say: "We are not prepared to put faith in the ideal which Musa has put forward, for it will shake the adoration which the people of Musa and Haroon show to us. Therefore it is necessary to maintain rigidly the existing life style of society, which must not be allowed to change at all. Human society must be held under the influence of greed and be authoritatively controlled. That is the only ".guarantee of our existence and the continuity of our rule

This was the second cause of the selection of inferior ideals as mentioned by the Qur'an. It is in this connection that the Qur'an has used the word 'taghut' (devil; false .(god; tyrant

The Qur'an says: Those who avoid the taghut lest they should worship them, and turn to Allah in repentance, for them there are glad tidings. Therefore give glad tidings to My slaves who hear advice and follow the best thereof. Such are those whom Allah (guides and such are men of understanding. (Surah al Ankabut, ۲۹:۱۷ -۱۸

Here Allah mentions the most important characteristic of those

who avoid the `taghut'. He says: Give glad tidings to My slaves who hear advice and .follow the best thereof

That means that those who avoid the taghut have a free and open mind. They are not set in a mould from which they cannot escape. To follow the truth is their only goal. .They hear what is said to them and follow the best thereof

They leave no stone unturned to find out and follow the truth. Had they been the worshippers of the taghut, they would have done only that which the taghut would have wanted them to do. They could not have heard what was said to them and could not have selected the best thereof. They could follow only that which the taghut .would have told them

.So far we have explained the second cause of following the low quality ideals

History passes through man's inner structure which determines his goals. The basis of man's goal is his ideals, and his ideals spring from his vital objectives. Every society has its own ideals which determine its course of action and provide milestones on its way of life. There are three kinds of ideals. We have so far explained the first kind of them, which springs from the existing conditions and circumstances of society. Such .ideals are always monotonous and boring

Under their impact history always moves in a circular way, in the sense that it takes .the existing condition and derives the absolute for the future out of it

The Qur'an holds that there are two causes which produce these ideals. The first cause, which is psychological, is people's attachment to the old customs and habits and their indolence and sensuality. The second cause is external. It is the domination .of the despots and tyrants over society throughout history

Selection of Ideal

point

Selection of inferior and low ideals often takes a religious colour. In order to make such an ideal permanently attractive, some religious value is attached to it and thus .effort is made to accord it some sort of sanctity and an artificial reverence

As we observed in the Qur'anic verses mentioned above, the societies which rejected the call of the Prophets in most cases tenaciously followed the religion and the ideals of their forefathers. In fact there is no low grade ideal which has not been clothed with a religious garb either explicitly or implicitly, for in the words of the Qur'an and according to the Islamic terminology ideals always take the place of a deity and the nations always adore their ideals to the extent of worshipping them, although in a .concealed manner

On the whole religion is nothing but a link between the worshipper and the worshipped. As people hold fast to their ideals, these ideals assume a religious colour either overtly or covertly. Even when they have some non-religious features or conceal themselves under some non-religious garb, virtually they imply the concept of religion and worship and involve the attachment of the worshipper to the .worshipped

In fact

all man-made religions are nothing but low grade and inferior ideals, which artificially have been converted into absolute truths. Otherwise these false doctrines are either figments of imagination or some unbacked conceptions remotely concerned with human development. They may be relative truths which have been supposed to be .absolute truths. Thus the limitations of inferior ideals creep into false religions

In other words the false religions which man chooses for himself by adopting these ideals are the result of regarding these ideals as genuine and exalting them by the flight of imagination to the status of whole truths. These religions in fact put up a challenge to the divine religion of Monotheism, which with its various dimensions is the supreme ideal for the entire humanity. We shall further elucidate this subject .subsequently

These false religions and imaginary gods which man has been inventing for himself in :every age are mere names devoid of all truth. The Qur'an says

They (false gods) are mere names which you and your fathers have coined, for which (Allah had revealed no warrant. (Surah an-Najm, ۵۳:۲۳

The gods which man conceives, the creed which he fabricates and the ideal which is a result of human imagination cannot form the basis of any sound religion. They cannot .be the means of human progress, for man can never create his own God

We have said that the societies and the nations adoring inferior ideals lead their lives in a circle. In other words the movement of history for them is monotonous

and circular. A nation which draws by artificial means its past to its present condition and its present condition to its future, will not in fact have a future, because its future .will be like its past

That is why when we study and analyse the condition of the nations which have adopted inferior ideals, we find that they soon become tired of their ideals and lose interest in them. Society gradually ceases to take interest in such ideals when it realizes that they have no practical value, for they can do no good and as practical experience will show, they have been unable to push the caravan of humanity forward and have failed to help society make any long term progress. With the disappearance of these ideals the legal unity among the vast groups of masses based .only on these common ideals is eroded and disappears soon

When a nation loses its link with its ideal, it is afflicted soon with disunity, confusion :and decay as the Qur'an says

Their adversity among themselves is very great. You think of them as a whole, whereas their hearts are diverse. That is because they are people who have no sense. ((Surah al Hashr, ۵۹:۱۴

Their adversity among themselves is great because they have no common ground for unity. They are apparently close to each other, but they have no common ideal. Each one of them goes a different way. Their hearts are disunited and their inclinations diverse. Their spirits are incongruous, and their minds

.are stagnant

In such circumstances national unity can no longer exist. All that remains is the apparition of a nation under the aegis of which each individual soon makes himself busy with his own personal affairs or some other petty affairs, for there exists no great ideal which may mobilize all forces and attract all talents and abilities for which .sacrifice may be made

When its ideal thus falls, the banner of the unity of the nation falls also. Everybody becomes busy with his limited affairs and personal interest and begins to think only of his limited problems, such as how to pass time, how to eat, how to drink and how to .provide means of comfort to himself and to his family members

He keeps himself engaged in establishing himself, in the cheap sense, that is short-term establishment which keeps man occupied with his material needs for ever and makes him a prisoner of his immediate needs and desires to the extent that he ceases to think of anything beyond them and all his efforts begin to revolve round them only, .for he finds nothing else in his life

When a nation loses its ideal, it may be said that virtually its ideal has fallen. As we have already said, such a nation on account of its not having a superior ideal becomes .a mere apparition without having a real existence

?How History Behaves with the Nation Having No Ideal

History shows that in such circumstances one or other of the following three historical :developments takes place

i) A nation having)

no ideal may collapse in the face of an external military attack, as the result of being decayed from within and having no coherent existence, for such a nation consists of only disunited individuals gathered together. Each member of such a nation cares for his own food, clothing and shelter and does not think in nationalistic terms. In these circumstances such a nation collapses in the face of an external military invasion. .Exactly this is the problem with which our Muslim ummah is confronted today

In the past when the Muslims lost their supreme ideal and withdrew themselves from the favour of Allah, they fell a prey to the invasion of the infidel Mongols. The Islamic Civilization of that time was destroyed, and the Muslim world which was subjected to .a foreign invasion, was disrupted internally also

ii) The second situation which such a nation may face is its absorption in a foreign and) imported ideal. A nation which loses its natural ideal that sprouted from within it, tries to fill the vacuum by an ideal which is imposed on it from outside and which .henceforward guides its destiny. This is the second possible historical development

iii) The third historical development is the return of the nation concerned to its) original ideal, the gradual implementation of this ideal in its life and its march on the .route of progress anew

The Muslim ummah is at present standing on the cross-roads of the second and the third possibilities. With the advent of the colonial

age of Muslim ummah finds two ways open in front of it. One of them invites it to its dissolution in some foreign ideology. This is the way which has been chosen by some .Muslim leaders in some Islamic countries

Reza Khan in Iran and Ataturk in Turkey wanted to apply the ideology of the advanced countries of Europe to the Muslim ummah. They asked the Muslims to give up their own ideology and accept the Western ideology instead of it.(1)

In contrast the pioneers of Muslim awakening in the beginning of colonial age and immediately before that tried to put the third possibility into effect by infusing a new life into the Muslim ummah through the dissemination of the supreme ideal. They wanted the Muslims to return to the Islamic way of life, and for that purpose presented Islam in modern language in conformity with the needs of the present day Muslims.(2)

A nation which has been bereft of its ideology and has been converted into a mere apparition has no alternative but to accept one of the three above-mentioned .possibilities, and act accordingly

So far we have been talking about the nation which chooses for itself inferior ideals or false gods, and for that reason is deprived of the quality of marching forward and has to move in a circular way. The repetitions of ideals tear society asunder and finally destroy it. A nation cut off from its genuine ideal is converted into a mere apparition and is confronted with one

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۱- (It was due to the limitations of the time of these lectures that the late Ayatullah mentioned only the names of the Reza Khan and Ataturk as an example of borrowing the foreign ideology. Otherwise there are several other countries of the region which even now are trying to run their affairs with imported ideology and to introduce a foreign culture)

۲- (The third world idea which has already matured with the Islamic revolution, led by revolutionary Iran, is the selection of the third possibility, which now has become the

movement of the down-trodden under the leadership of Imam Khumayni. (Unfortunately the late Ayatullah Sadr was not in a position to say that in clear terms

.of the three above-mentioned historical developments

Now we go a step backward to discuss the second kind of the ideals. They also are nothing but virtually false gods. As we said in the beginning the ideals portray three .outlooks, and hence there are three kinds of them

Second Kind of Ideals

So far we have talked about the first kind of the ideals. Now let us take up the second kind of them. The second kind of the ideals represent the aspirations of a nation for the future. They are not repetitions because they do not represent the daily needs. .They are forward looking

One of their characteristics is that they show a desire for something new. These ideals represent a step forward, but only a step. In other words they are not high enough. They are useful, but their range is limited. Nations cannot traverse a very long distance with their help, but can be benefited by their forward-looking feature in .a limited way

These so called superior ideals have a sound aspect, but do not fully accord with great human potentialities, and from this point of view they are trivial. Still they have a sound aspect because man cannot visualize the whole way he has to traverse nor can he comprehend the absolute, his mental faculties being limited. With his limited mind all he can do is to have a glimpse of the Absolute, with which he can illuminate his way .and thus have the good luck of seeking the Absolute

It is an

indisputable fact that man's acquirement in this respect is very limited. The dangerous part of it is that what man gets from the Absolute is not absolute, but is only a ray of light from the Absolute. But man very often imagines this insignificant ray of light to be the light of the heaven and the earth and mixes it up within the Absolute. Here lies the danger. When man wants to acquire his supreme ideal, he creates it out of his limited .mental concept of future

It is this relative concept which man converts into the absolute through his imagination. This type of superior concept may serve man for the time being, may provide him ground for development as far as it can embody the future and may .activate him to the extent of the possibilities this future can provide

But very soon a limit is reached and further progress is stopped, for the ideal which has been converted into a religion and a god, becomes the existing condition and as such hinders man's effort to attain his perfection, for it is a big mistake to generalize a limited ideal and raise it to the status of the Absolute. This generalization is sometimes horizontal and sometimes temporal, but in both the cases generalization of the ideal is .absolutely wrong

The vertical generalization is wrong when the concept of his ideal deprives man from conceiving the next step and he considers his ideal all that he should strive for, although this

ideal in spite of its soundness forms only a part of the values he holds dear. Such generalization is wrong, for we should not concentrate all our effort on that which is only a part of that for which we should strive.

For example let us consider the case of the modern European man who in the beginning of the Renaissance period chose freedom as his supreme ideal. At that time man in the West was badly downtrodden. The Church had put chains round his hands and feet in all walks of life, and he was under most severe restrictions in respect of religious and scientific matters. Even for the supply of his food he depended on the feudal lords.

At that time the European of the pre-renaissance period decided to release himself from the shackles of the Church and feudalism. He decided that man should be made free to do whatever he wished, to use his own mind to think, not the mind of others, and to judge things personally without depending on others. This was a sound idea, but it was wrong to take it too far and generalize it.

Freedom, that is the unchaining of man's hands and feet, is no doubt one of the frameworks of values, but it alone is not enough to build man. You cannot break all bonds and tell man to do whatever he likes. At the same time you cannot find a single feudalist, a king, a priest or a dictator who is powerful

.enough to force you to adopt an ideology or to give it up

It is not enough to break the chains. Freedom from them only provides a framework for the progress and development of humanity, but proper development of individuals requires an inner basis in the light of which progress may be made. Mere freedom to do whatever one wants and to go wherever one wishes is not enough. Man must know how and why he should take a particular step. The Europeans have missed this .point

The European has made freedom his goal. No doubt freedom is good, but not good enough to be an ideal. Freedom is only a frame. It requires some content. We must know why we want to be free. In case we do not know what is the purpose of .freedom, its consequences may be very dangerous and unfortunate

Today the Western Civilization has acquired the means of total destruction of humanity. The West is groaning under the impact of them, because Western freedom is devoid of any content. This is an example of vertical generalization and expansion .of the ideals. When ideals are expanded vertically, they create all this trouble

The same is the case with the-temporal generalization and expansion. All over history we come across the examples of noteworthy actions, some successful, but we must not give them too much significance beyond what they originally aimed at. They may serve as a stepping-stone for proceeding towards the Absolute, but they cannot be looked at as

.an ideal

History says that several families form a tribe; several tribes form a clan and several clans form a community or a nation. Should these formations be found helpful for the progress of society and unity of the nations, there is no harm in recognizing them, but they should not be converted into an absolute ideal for which man may fight and even .wage a war

The absolute for the sake of which a war should be waged is only the true Absolute, that is Allah. As such the above mentioned arrangement is nothing but a method and a .frame, not an absolute ideal

This was an example of incorrect temporal generalization and expansion. If we stretch too far a thing which is of limited significance and is only a first step, make an ideal of it and try to defend it as such over all times, we certainly do something very .wrong

A man who converts a limited view into an absolute view valid for all times is exactly like him who looks at the unlimited horizon with his eyes, and although his faculty of vision does not allow him to see beyond a limited distance, yet he thinks that the world ends at the point up to which he has seen and believes that at that point the sky and .the earth actually meet

A man may see a mirage and believes that water is available at a short distance, but in fact this wrong notion is due to

the inability of his eyes to discern clearly the strapping stretch of dry land, from a long .distance

Similarly because of the inadequacy of human mind and the limitation of human faculty of thinking, a man who from a long distance of human history wants to determine its course, sees a horizon exactly like the geographical horizon. He should treat it simply as a horizon, not as an absolute. We see the geographical horizon at a distance of ۲۰ or ۲۰۰ meters, but we never say that the earth ends there. We only say .that the horizon is there

In the case of historical horizon also man should think in the terms of horizon only and should not make the supreme ideal of it. Otherwise he will be like him who goes after !a mirage instead of water. How beautifully has Allah described this similitude

As for those who disbelieve, their deeds are as a mirage in a desert. The thirsty one supposes it to be water till he comes to it and finds it nothing and finds in the place thereof Allah, who pays him his due; and Allah is swift at reckoning. (Surah an Nur, (۲۴:۳۹

At another place the Qur'an compares the fabricated and polytheistic ideals to the :spider's cobweb. It says

The likeness of those who choose other patrons than Allah is as the likeness of the spider when she takes to herself a house. Surely the frailest of all houses is the .spider's house, if they but knew

p: ۱۹۲

(Surah al Ankabut, ۲۹:۴۱)

If we compare between these two kinds of ideals, one of which is inspired by the concrete existing condition and the other by the limited human aspiration about the future, we find that an ideal inspired by the present condition is largely a stage or a continuation of some other ideal inspired by the limited human aspiration about the future.

When an ambitious man chooses and attains an inferior ideal which can be achieved in a short time, this ideal assumes the form of a limited ideal moving in a circle. That is why we said earlier that if we take a few steps backward from one type of gods (deities), the other type of gods would appear to us. The position in this respect may be summarized as under:

In the beginning a community chooses its aspiration about the future as its ideal. Soon this ideal begins to move in a circle, and gradually it reduces the whole nation to a mere apparition. During this process the nation passes through four stages detailed as under:

(i) Active Stage of the Ideal - The ideal begins as an aspiration about the future. The Qur'an describes the activity of this ideal and the service which it may render as "quick". The advantage which ensues from it is quick but does not last long. Such an ideal is short-lived and its benefits are insignificant.

Before long it turns into a force that destroys all that had been achieved. That is why this

kind of ideal has been described by the Qur'an as quick and immediate. See what the :Qur'an says

For him who desires a short term benefit, We hasten in this fleeting world whatever We will and to whom We please. Then We assign to him Hell in which he shall burn despised and rejected. As for him who desires the Hereafter and strives for it as he should, his efforts shall be rewarded by Allah. We bestow your Lord's favours both on (these and those and none is deprived of them. (Surah Bani Isra'il, ۱۷:۱۸-۲۰

Allah, the Glorious is absolute good, absolute blessing and absolute existence. He extends His favour to man in consonance with the capacity of the ideal he chooses. Allah also favours him who chooses an inferior ideal, but in his case His favour is of .short duration, for in the Hereafter such a man will get nothing

In the beginning an ideal inspired by the existing conditions appears to be powerful, superior and creative. As the whole nation or community participates in choosing and .implementing it, it becomes a guiding force and produces some positive results

But in the opinion of the Qur'an, which always makes a long term planning, these immediate results are followed by Hell and punishment. In this world and the next world woeful is the fate of those who choose inferior ideals. This first stage may be .called the stage of renovation

ii) The ۲nd stage comes when this ideal becomes inert and its power and)

force are exhausted. At this stage the ideal stands like a statue. The leaders who were guiding the nation on the basis of this ideal, cease to be the leaders and become an object of reverence. The common people instead of being their comrades in reconstruction and development, become their obedient servants. This is the stage :which has been described by the Qur'an as the obedience of the chiefs and the elders

And they say: Our Lord! We surely obeyed our chiefs and elders and they misled us (from the way. (Surah al Ahzab, ۳۳:۶۷

iii) The ۳rd stage comes, which is a continuation of the preceding two stages. At this) stage the power gets concentrated in the hands of a particular group or class on the basis of its family and class position and is transferred hereditarily. In these circumstances a class comes into being, which has no goal and no value in life. It is :always occupied with its own petty interests. The Qur'an says

Similarly We sent not a warner before you into any township but its luxurious ones said: 'We surely found our fathers following a religion, and we are following their (footprints.' (Surah az Zukhruf, ۴۳:۲۳

Such people are a historical continuation of their forefathers who made history. Similarly others will be their historical continuation. Their historical affinity exceeds the limits of an ideal and instead of being a constructive force, culminates in the .creation of a hereditary class of the luxurious ones

This was the third stage

of the choice of inferior ideals. As the relation of these ideals is ultimately severed .from the nation concerned, the nation enters the fourth stage

iv) This ۴th stage is the most dangerous one, for at this stage the tyrants and the dirty) elements come to the helm of the affairs of the nation. They do not abide by any :covenant or undertaking given by them. In this respect the Qur'an says

And thus We set in every township its biggest criminals to make intrigues. They do not (intrigue but against themselves. (Surah al An'am, ۶:۱۲۳

In such circumstances some worst criminals come to power, as Hitler and his Nazis subdued an important part of Europe and tried to destroy all the fruits of culture, industrial inventions and the sciences of Europe with a view to annihilate the ideal which the modern European man raised with his own hands to the extent that it began to move in a circle, and consequently got largely corrupted and rotten. Anyhow, some of its accomplishments had continued to exist in European society, when Hitler appeared and tried to annihilate it totally. Now the time has come to mention the third .kind of ideals

Third Kind of Ideals

The only ideal of the third kind of the ideals is Allah. In the case of this ideal the contradiction we mentioned earlier is easily resolved. The gist of the contradiction was that any thing that exists in man's mind is limited, but an ideal must be limitless. Then how can we arrive

?at something limitless by means of something limited

In the case of the ideal, that is Allah, this contradiction does not exist, for this ideal is not a product of man's mind. Allah is not a mental idea picked out by man's mind from a number of ideas. He has a concrete existence. He is an Absolute Being actually .existing. He is All-powerful, All-knowing and All just

This Actually Existing Being is fit to be the ideal because He is absolute. Yet there is one thing to be noted. When man wants to acquire some light from this limitless source of light, obviously he can acquire it only in a limited and measurable quantity. Whatever he acquires has definite limits, whereas the absolute ideal has no such .limits. He is neither perceptible nor imaginable

Yet the light which man acquires from Him is definitely restricted within exact limits, though the ideal is not restricted within any limits. That is why Islam insists that one must always distinguish Allah, the ideal from all that exists in one's mind. One must make difference even between Allah and His Divine Names. Islam emphasizes that the Divine Name is not to be worshipped. Only the named is to be worshipped, for the .name has mental existence only

Its relation with Allah is only mental. Therefore the named is to be worshipped, not the name, for while the named is absolute, the name is limited like all mental ideas. Allah is Self-existing and does not depend

on any one or any thing. He is far from having any characteristic qualities attributable .to the creation

All Proceed towards Absolute Ideal

point

Surely you, O men, are striving hard toward your Lord and so you are going to meet (Him. (Surah al Inshiqaq, ۸۴:۶

This Qur'anic verse sets a very high target for human society. It says that humanity endeavours on every level to meet its Lord. In this verse the word, 'kadh' has been used, which means persistent movement and tedious and irksome progress. The whole human society has to work hard to move forward, for this is not an ordinary .movement

It is an ascending movement representing development and evolution. It may be compared to the serious effort the mountaineers have to make to get on the top of a .mountain. They have to cross many heights to reach the summit

Their movement is irksome and requires great effort. The same way humanity endeavours to reach Allah. Only by making a persistent effort it is possible to climb the ladder of perfection, to make evolutionary progress and to proceed to the high .position that befits humanity

It is evident that this persistent movement requires a way along which man marching towards perfection should move till he reaches his destination. This way has been .described in several verses of the Qur'an as the way of Allah or the path of Allah

These expressions of the Qur'an indicate the existence of a way along which man ,must move. As a way is necessary for movement

similarly movement is a necessary corollary of a way. When the above quoted verse .says that man is striving hard, it speaks of an actual fact and an existing reality

This verse is not a call to the people to follow Allah's way. It is not meant to urge people or to encourage them to take any action. Unlike some other verses it does not express a command. It does not ask people to come to Allah's way or to repent in :Allah's House or to do any other such thing. Instead it says

Surely you, O men, are striving hard towards your Lord and so you are going to meet .Him

Thus it mentions an actual fact that man's every movement in his long historical march is towards Allah. Even the groups which have chosen from themselves inferior ideals and false gods and are called polytheists by the Qur'an, take steps towards .Allah, when they are found advancing in their long journey

Their advancement towards Allah depends on the motivating power of their ideals. If these ideals push them forward, that means that they become nearer to their Lord. But there is a difference between the progress which creates a sense of responsibility .and the progress which, as we shall explain, does not have this characteristic

When humanity makes progress while fully conscious of its ideals, it is said that worship has been performed. It is a characteristic of worship that all along it is analogous to the world and

in complete harmony with world conditions. Yet even an unconscious advance in relation to an ideal is a movement towards Allah, though as we pointed out, .irresponsible

Hence every advance is a movement towards Allah, even the advance of those who go after a mirage. As it is inferred from the above quoted verse, those who tend to proceed social mirages and choose inferior ideal for themselves, when reach these mirages, they notice that there is nothing there and find in place thereof Allah who .pays them their due

It is evident from this verse that, Allah is the end of their journey, yet He is not a geographical and like the end of a geographical route. For example, if we take into consideration the route between Tehran and Isfahan, Isfahan is the terminal point, .that is the end of this geographical route

In other words, Isfahan is situated at the end of the route, not in between. If a person travels towards Isfahan and stops somewhere on his way, he cannot be called to have reached Isfahan, which is the terminal point and which we call the end of the route. Anyhow Allah is not a geographical end in this way. Allah is Absolute. He is Self-existent. There is no place where Allah is not present. His existence has no limit. He is the end of the journey, but He is all along the way also. The person who traverses only the half way - he who reaches a mirage, stops

?at it and discovers that it is only a mirage – what does he find

We observe that according to the Qur'anic verse, he finds that Allah is there and that Allah pays him his due, for the Absolute is present at every point on route also. As man advances on his way, he realizes his ideal in proportion to his progress. He finds Allah as much as he advances along his way. As Allah is Absolute, the way to Him also has .no end

Therefore a journey to Him means only to come near to Him. The more man advances, the nearer to Allah he comes, but this nearness is always relative. Man only can take some steps along the line of march, but he cannot traverse the whole route, for a limited being can never reach the Absolute. A limited being cannot reach the .unlimited one

Therefore in this case there exists an unlimited field between man and his ideal. In other words, man has an unlimited field of action. He can make unlimited progress. The scope of his development is unlimited, for the way before him is indefinitely long .and limitless

Quantitative and Qualitative Changes

Two changes, one quantitative and the other qualitative appear in man when he regards his real ideal as the indicator of his route to humanity and reconciles his reason and understands with the universal truth ensuing from the ideal which he holds to be the true reality. In other words when man's conscious advance is reconciled with

the cosmic reality of his advance, quantitative and qualitative changes appear in him, .for man and the world both are advancing towards Allah

Man's movement towards Allah produces a quantitative change in him, because as we said earlier, the way towards his true ideal has no limit. In other words, there always exists for him an opportunity for self-construction, self-development and progress and the door for his going forward is ever open, for the ideal can remove from his way every false god, every idol and every idol-like impurity that may become .a barrier between him and his Allah

Hence the monotheistic religion constitutes a constant struggle and a continuous war against all false gods and low and repetitious ideals, for an ideal other than Allah always requires man to confine his movement up to a particular point only. The false .gods want him to stop in the middle of his journey

All over history the monotheistic religion has borne the standard of opposition to all false gods and low ideals. That is why the true ideal brings about a quantitative change in man's movement, unties his shackles and liberates him from the bonds of .artificial limits and thus enables him to continue to march forward

As for the qualitative change in the man's movement, it is brought about by the true ideal through providing a basic solution of human contradictions and controversies. Man gets a sense of responsibility as the result of his faith in this ideal and a consciousness of his

universal limits. This consciousness creates in him a deep sense of responsibility. Unlike all other motivating ideals over human history, it is only to this ideal that man .feels responsible

Why so? It is so because this ideal has a concrete reality and in no way depends on man. It is from here that the logical condition of responsibility materializes, for a true responsibility two sides are required: a responsible person and to whom he owes responsibility. If there is no higher side or the man responsible does not have faith in .it, no sense of responsibility can be produced at all

For example take low and inferior ideals into consideration. These important gods and abject deities have done over human history nothing other than creating dissensions and undue discriminations among mankind. These ideals along with man form one whole and are reckoned as a part of a total. Man cannot feel to have a sense of responsibility towards something which he has set apart from himself and which he :himself has shaped and developed. The Qur'an says

(They are but names which you have named. (Surah an Najm, ۵۳:۲۳

These ideals cannot create a sense of personal responsibility. Owing to them laws may be framed and habits and customs may be framed but all such things remain superficial and seeming. Man can throw off these habits and customs at the first .opportunity available to him

On the contrary the ideal which has been presented as the monotheistic religion of the Prophets, having

all over history a concrete reality independent of man and fulfills all the necessary .conditions in this respect

Why have the Prophets brought about the most intensive revolutions in human history? Why have they been the soundest revolutionaries in the world? Why have the Prophets on the historical stage been above all personal consideration? Why have ?they not agreed to any compromise? Why have they never wavered in their mission

Why have the Prophets been like that? We find many revolutionaries in history who changed their doctrines, but it has never been heard that a Prophet ever wavered in his mission or faltered in his compliance with the teachings of his revealed Book. The Prophets always remained steady because they had an ideal which was independent of man and superior to him. This ideal gave them a glimmer of the sense of .responsibility

This sense is not a matter of secondary importance in man's spiritual journey. It is the basic condition of his success in this respect. It is the sense of responsibility which resolves man's inner conflict and contradictions. According to his creational scheme man always lives in a state of contradiction, for according to the Qur'an he has been .created of clay as well as of a flash of divine spirit

The Qur'an says that man has been created of clay. It also says that a breath or a flash of divine spirit has been breathed into him. As such man is a combination of two things. His clay (origin) draws

him to the earth and calls him to base desires, material tendencies and all that is low, .vile and becoming of the earth

At the same time the breath of divine spirit breathed into him calls him to high and noble qualities and lifts him so much that he comes near to the divine qualities and adopts them. Divine spirit invites him to Allah's endless knowledge, His endless power, His endless justice, His generosity and magnanimity, His mercy, His retribution and .His other attributes and qualities

Man finds himself in the midst of the contradiction. He had fallen into this conflicting situation as a result of the nature of his psychical content and his inner structure. It is man's inherent nature which has given rise to this conflict and contradiction, as we .shall elucidate by explaining the story of Adam, the first man

The only way of resolving this contradiction is the creation of a sense of responsibility. Mere perception of this inner conflict can identify this conflict, but cannot do away with it. Nothing can create a sense of personal responsibility in man except his choice .of the supreme ideal

It is this lofty ideal that makes man realize that he is accountable to his Lord, Who is Omnipotent and Omniscient and who recompenses him for all his good and bad deeds. Therefore a sense of inner responsibility which is a sort of a qualitative change in man's behaviour, is the only way of resolving the contradiction and conflict having their

.roots in man's nature

The role of the monotheistic relation is to facilitate the adoption of this solution and with the growth of its quantitative and qualitative effect to remove the obstacles in the way of human progress. While supporting this solution the monotheistic religion carries out an incessant and intensive struggle against artificial, low and repetitious ideals which stop man's progress on the one hand and make him devoid of the sense .of responsibility on the other

That is why, as already mentioned, the fight of the Prophets against false gods has throughout history been incessant and intensive. Every low ideal on completion of its incubation period assumed the form of an idol and gains supporters. It is but natural that those whose material interests and worldly position depend on such ideals, .keenly defend them

That was the reason why those whose interests depended on the low ideals or idols tooth and nail opposed the Prophets and fought against them in defense of their own .material and worldly interests and the luxurious life which they led

The Qur'an has revealed a norm of history when it states that there has been a continuous clash between the Prophets, because they were the people who were benefited by the false ideals. When these ideals assumed the form of idols, they were against those given to easy life and enjoyment who reaped all the benefits and .justified their own existence by the existence of their idols

Therefore it was but natural that the people living at ease

who had vested interests were always in the front line of those who were hostile to :the Prophets. The Holy Qur'an says

We did not send a warner before you to any township but its luxurious ones said: 'Surely we found our fathers following a religion and we are following their footprints' ((Surah az-Zukhruf, ۴۳:۲۳

We did not send to any township a warner, but it's pampered ones declared: 'No (doubt we are disbelievers in what you bring to us' (Surah as-Sabah, ۳۴:۳۴

I shall deprive them of the blessing of My revelations those who are arrogant in the earth, and if they see any sign, they do not believe it and if they see the way of righteousness, they do not choose it as their way, and if they see the way of error they choose it as their way. That is because they deny Our revelations and are used to (disregard them. (Surah al-A'raf, ۷:۱۴۶

And the chieftains of his fold, who disbelieved and denied the meeting o f the Hereafter, and whom We had made prosperous in the life of this world, said: 'He is only a human being like you, who eats like you eat and drinks like you drink' (Surah al (Mu'minun, ۲۳:۳۳

Therefore in order to exterminate their false gods the monotheistic religion has taken steps to neutralize the interests of these luxurious people. In the beginning these false gods were only ideals, but subsequently their statues were made and thus they were converted into idols. The monotheistic religion

.severs man's relation with these low and abject gods

Yet is it possible to sever the relation of humanity with these abject ideals and bury their heads under ground simply to allow them to raise their heads again in a different godless form, as has been the case with the dialectical-materialistic revolutionaries who take inspiration from historical materialism and from what they call the materiality of history. They also like us fight against false gods and call a belief in them .the opium of the nations

Yet the difference between our thinking and theirs is that we do not fight against the false gods to convert man into an animal or to sever man's relation with his spirit of lofty love and adoration. We do not fight against them to drag humanity to a lower .course

We sever man's relation with inferior ideals to establish his relation with his real and supreme ideal, to guide him back to the course of humanity and to attach him to his Almighty Allah with a view to bring about in him the desired quantitative and .qualitative changes in the course of his development

Now it must be understood clearly that the march of humanity towards this supreme :ideal depends on certain prerequisite conditions which are as under

i) Clear Intellectual and Ideological Approach to the Supreme Ideal: To have a clear) idea of the supreme ideal prevailing over history and which depended on monotheism. This belief co-ordinates and unifies all ideals, goals, aspirations, desires and

all human knowledge in the Person of the Supreme Ideal, who is all-Knowledge, all-Power, all-Justice, all-Mercy and all-Retribution.

The doctrine of monotheism gives us a clear idea of this ideal who has realized all aspirations and goals in His Person. This doctrine teaches us that we should regard all Divine attributes as concrete facts, but dissimilar to our own qualities and characteristics.

We should regard the Divine attributes as a model, as a practical guide, as a goal for our practical advance and as mile-stones on our long route to the Almighty. The doctrine of monotheism fulfils the condition of providing a clear ideological and intellectual approach to our ideal.

ii) The existence of a psychological force emanating from this ideal so that it may serve as a permanent asset and a motivating force for human will over history. This spiritual force which we call the motivating force of will, is inspired by our faith in Allah. This faith crystallizes in the belief in the Doomsday and the Day of Resurrection, which are a continuation of the life of this world.

A belief in resurrection and the life after death teaches man that the small historical field in which he plays his role in this world, has a strong link with other fields or worlds called barzakh (purgatory) and the hereafter.

Man's condition in those great and perilous worlds depends on the role he plays in the historical field of this world. This belief equips man with a spiritual force that brings his

.will into action and fortifies it for successfully performing his role in the other worlds

iii) This supreme ideal of which we are talking differs from inferior ideals because it is) outside the existence of man. It is not a part of man detached from him. The supreme ideal has its own separate and independent existence. It is everywhere and is not a .part of man

Its separation from man makes it necessary that there be a link between man and this ideal. Other ideals have a human aspect and they have been detached from man. .As such it is not necessary that man should have any link with them

Of course the devils and the Pharaohs have over history tried to establish links of some sort between man and the so called gods of the sun and the stars. But such links are false, for these gods are imaginary and fictitious. They are only a mental concept .detached from man and given a concrete shape

In contrast the supreme ideal has no existence absolutely separate from man, and hence there should be genuine link between man and this ideal. It is this genuine link that has found full expression in the role of the Prophets. Every Prophet has pointed out the existence of this link, for a Prophet is the person who fulfils in himself the first and the second conditions of arranging the progress of humanity to this ideal by the .Will of Allah

He has a clear ideological vision

of this ideal and at the same time his psychological force is fully saturated with this belief in Allah and the Day of Judgment. These two elements combined in his person help him play the role of a Prophet, and the link between the supreme ideal and humanity expressed in this combination makes the Prophet a warner and bringer of .good tidings

When humanity arrives at the stage called by the Qur'an the `Decisive' stage, the significance of which we shall explain in our forthcoming lectures, things so develop that the coming of a warner and bringer of good tidings becomes insufficient, for this .is the stage when the low ideals or false gods block the road of man's development

At this stage it becomes necessary to remove the obstacles and pull down the barriers which prevent man from proceeding towards Allah - the Almighty. At this stage it is necessary for humanity to launch a campaign and fight against the false gods, vicious and malignant beings and low ideals which regard themselves as the guardians of humanity but actually are a sort of highwaymen, for they block the way .of humanity and prevent it from continuing its onward historical movement

For this purpose a leader is required. Such a leader is called Imam and his role is known as Imamat. An Imam is the leader who guides and supervises human combat against falsehood. At a stage of Prophethood the roles of the Imam and the Prophet are amalgamated. The Qur'an

has spoken of this feature and we shall discuss it shortly. Most probably this .amalgamation began with Prophet Nuh

The role of the Imam is though amalgamated with that of the Prophet, yet it continues even after the role of the Prophet has come to an end. This happens when a Prophet quits the field while the fight is still on and it is necessary in the interest of his mission that the struggle for crushing the false gods be continued. In such a case the period of Imamat maintains the continuity of the role of Prophethood even after its coming to an end

This was the fourth condition of arranging the way of human progress to the supreme ideal. In its light we can have a clear idea of what we call the five cardinal principles of religion. Now we shall see how sound these five principles are and how they .determine man's historical course

:The five cardinal principles of religion are as under

i) Monotheism: The role of monotheism lies in the fact that it provides us with a clear) intellectual and ideological point of view. Monotheism attaches all human aspirations .and goals to the supreme ideal, that is Allah

ii) Divine Justice: Justice is just another dimension of monotheism. From social point) of view knowledge, power and other attributes of Allah are not His distinguishing features, but justice is, for justice is the quality which can give many things to society .and can make it independent of others

In the course of

our social progress we need justice more than any other quality. Justice has appeared as the second cardinal principle of religion, because from social point of view it has a .guiding and instructional aspect

We have said earlier that Islam teaches us not to regard the Divine attributes as mere metaphysical realities having no connection with us. We should look at them as sign-.posts which guide us to pursue a certain way of life

From this point of view, justice is the biggest concept that can guide humanity, and for this very reason it is distinguished from other attributes. Otherwise justice lies within .the framework of total monotheism. It is an essential quality of a perfect ideal

iii) Belief in Prophethood: It is the third cardinal principle of religion. It establishes a genuine link between man and his ideal. As said earlier humanity needs this link when it marches toward its ideal, that is Allah who is independent of man, and has neither been detached from him nor produced by-him. It is a Prophet who ensures the establishment of this link. Throughout history the Prophets have satisfied this real .need

iv) Imamat: It is that leadership which amalgamates with Prophethood. A Prophet is an Imam also. He performs the functions of Imamat as well as Prophethood. Yet Imamat continues if the struggle is not over even after the end of the period of a .Prophet, and a leader is still required to carry out his mission

In such a case an Imam shoulders

this responsibility and during the period of his Imamat supervises the unfinished work .of the Prophet. Thus Imamat is the fourth cardinal principle of religion

v) The Day of Resurrection: The fifth principle is the belief in the Day of Resurrection.) This principle ensures the fulfillment of the second condition out of the four prerequisite condition of arranging the progress of humanity to the true ideal, as mentioned above. The principle of the Hereafter creates a psychological force that .motivates and fortifies human will and guarantees man's responsible behaviour

From the foregoing it is clear that in the final analysis these cardinal principles of religion are the elements which take part in man's adoption of the supreme ideal. They have also determined the social relationship of this ideal over history as we .explained in a previous lecture when we discussed the four-fold advantage of religion

We explained earlier that according to the concept presented by the Qur'an the social relations are four-dimensional and not three-dimensional. We deduced this concept from the word `istikhlaf (appointing a vicegerent) used by the Qur'an. Explaining this .word we said that appointing a vicegerent had four dimensions

It required the existence of man, nature, Allah - the Almighty and the person appointed the vicegerent. This combination of four-fold social relationship is another way of expressing the combination of the five-fold cardinal principles of religion for .the purpose of the tedious and long journey of man to Allah - the Almighty

The above mentioned facts explain man's role in

determining the course of history. In his historical journey man is the centre of gravity, not as a physical body, but because of his inner content, the meaning of which we have already explained. The basis of man's inner content is the ideal which he .himself chooses

The true ideal is only that which can ensure to man all his main and prior goals and objectives, which serve as historical incentives to his activities on the stage of history. Hence the choice of the supreme ideal by man as his ideal lays the strong foundation .of his inner content. This shows the importance of the role of this fourth dimension

Analysis of Social Elements ۲

point

Society consists of three elements: Men, nature and the social relations which influence the course of history. In the previous lectures we spoke about man and his basic role in historical field. We also spoke about nature and discussed its characteristics. Now we propose to discuss the social relations so that we may know our position in regard to these relations vis-à-vis what we deduced from the Qur'an in .respect of the role of man and nature on the stage of history

We have already made some comments on this third element, namely the social relations and social ties. Social relations include two kinds of contacts, one being man's contact with nature and the other man's contact with his fellow beings. These are two different and comparatively independent lines of relationship, their reciprocal ,impact on each other being almost insignificant

.as we shall explain

These two lines are not identical. Each of them is comparatively independent and .corresponds to the solution presented in case of each problem

The first line represents man's contact with nature. Man tries to exploit the natural resources. He wants to bring nature under his control so that he may meet the needs of his life. Here he faces a big problem which we may call the problem of contradiction between man and nature. In other words, nature takes a stand against man and does not respond to his needs. Consequently a clash between man and nature takes place. .Nature shows might and does not obey men

This contradiction between man and nature is the biggest problem of this line. The solution of this problem lies in acting according to a law of nature which is an important norm of history. This law is the law of reciprocal effect between practice and skill. As man's ignorance about nature diminishes and his knowledge of its language and laws increases, proportionately his control over nature to meet his needs, is enhanced. As with more practice he acquires more skill, he makes many new .discoveries

The law of reciprocal effect between practice and skill being a sound law, can undertake to resolve this contradiction. Hence the solution of the problem of .contradiction between man and nature can safely be left to this law

In other words it may be said that the more man's ignorance about nature diminishes and the more his acquaintance

with it increases as the result of practical experiments, the more fresh skill is gained .by him

The fresh skill thus acquired awards man a power of controlling nature in new fields and with further practice and experiences in new fields, he again acquires more fresh skill. This process continues so long as no unexpected accident occurs to disturb man's relation with nature. The expansion and practical application of this law .gradually resolves the problem of contradiction between man and nature

Therefore it may be said that from historical and realistic point of view this problem stands resolved. Perhaps the under mentioned Qur'anic verse is meant to refer to this :very solution

And he gives you of all you ask of Him, and if you would count the bounty of Allah, you (cannot reckon it. (Surah Ibrahim ۱۴:۳۴

In this verse asking is not meant to mean any verbal prayer, for this verse refers to all men without any distinction. It does not make any difference between the believers who pray to Allah and the disbelievers who do not. It is also a known fact that it is not always necessary that one gets all that one prays for. There is no doubt that every prayer is heard, but that does not mean that all that is asked is granted. Yet in this :verse Allah says

.He gives you all you ash o f Him

In other words, in this verse a practical response to every request has been promised. ,Most probably

the request mentioned in this verse relates to all men over history, during all times, past, present and future. This request lies in man's creational scheme and applies over history to the law of reciprocal effect between practice and skill. As such this verse shows how the problem ensuing from man's contact with nature is to be .resolved

Basic Contradiction in Man's Existence

In the case of the second line, that is man's contact with his fellow human being, like two brothers, in various social fields including such cases as the distribution of wealth and the clash of different human cultures, we are confronted with another problem. This time the problem is not that of contradiction between man and nature, but is that .of contradiction between man and his fellow beings

This contradiction between men in various social fields has many forms and many names but basically it is a contradiction between the strong and the weak, between the powerful and the powerless. When a powerful being is unable to resolve his own contradiction, that is his inner conflict, his obsession will before long appear in the form of a social contradiction, which may take any shape or form and may be tagged with any law or cultural usage yet in the final analysis will be same form of .contradiction between the strong and the weak

It does not make any difference if sometimes the strong is an individual by the name of Pharaoh, sometimes a class and sometimes a community or a nation. All these are various

forms of contradiction and the ruling spirit in each case it that of conflict and exploitation. In each case there is a clash between a weak individual and a strong man whose inner conflict and contradiction has remained unresolved and who .consequently tries to exploit a weak individual to satisfy his own vanity

We observe various forms of social contradiction along the line of man's contact with his fellow man, yet the spirit in each case is the same, and all contradictions spring, as we have just said, from one basic contradiction, that is man's inner conflict or the contradiction between a handful of clay and a flash of the desire to meet Allah. So long as one of these two tendencies does not completely suppress the other tendency, the .contradiction will continue to exist in all circumstances

Although both these tendencies are always present, yet one of them is usually predominant according to the actual condition of society and according to the level of .the thinking and general education of the individual concerned

The viewpoint of Islam in regard to the problem of human relations is very vast and deep. No form of contradiction has been ignored by it. It takes into consideration all forms of contradiction, analyses them fully and finds out their common spirit. So it has linked all contradictions to a more deep-rooted contradiction, that is man's own inner .conflict

That is why Islam believes that one mission alone can solve the whole problem of human relations. It

can simultaneously work on two levels. It can strive in the historical field to remove social contradictions and at the same time or even before it and after it, can resolve .man's inner conflict. Thus it can dry up the social contradictions at their very source

Islam believes that if we leave the source of inner conflict unattended and try to resolve outward social contradictions with the help of some laws and their interpretations, we will be attending to only one half of the problem. The other half, that is the crystallization of the inner conflict, if left unattended, will soon give rise to .some other forms of the same contradiction which we have tried to exterminate

Therefore a mission which wants to propose a realistic solution of this problem, while doing so must take into consideration both the inner and outer levels, and believe that to resolve the problem finally it is necessary to carry out the struggle on both the levels. The struggle which is carried out to remove inner conflict and purify the heart is .called by Islam major Jihad

The other type of jihad is that which is carried out to do away with every form of social contradiction and to put an end to the exploitation of the weak by the strong. Instead of confining our struggle to any one form of exploitation we should try to remove the .root cause which is common to all acts of exploitation

Short–sightedness of Marx

This is the viewpoint the correctness of which

has been proved by human experience over history. In contrast to it, is how the .materialistic revolutionaries interpret the social contradiction or the social conflict

Because of his being a European Marx with all his super intelligence could not go a step further than the limits of the views held by the ordinary Europeans, to whose popular view he considered himself to be indebted. The Europeans think that the world ends where Europe or rather the West ends. Their view in this respect is similar to that of the Jews who maintain that they alone represented the entire humanity. :They used to say

What have we to do with the ordinary people (of Makkah or Hijaz). (Surah Ale Imran, (٣:٧٥

The Jews meant that the Arab of Hijaz had no importance. Similarly in the eyes of the Europeans the world is confined to Europe or rather the West. Marx has not been able to set himself free from the European way of thinking, nor could he rescue himself from the pressure of the class factor which plays an important role in his theory of historical materialism. Influenced by this cheap theory he has made a comparatively .limited interpretation of the contradiction faced by man

According to him all human contradictions boil down to just one contradiction, that is class contradiction or class conflict, existing between a class that owns all or most of the production instruments and another class that does not own them and works for the interests of the former

.class and depends on it for the use of the production instruments

When wealth is produced through the sweat of the brow of an exploited worker, it is grabbed by the class that owns the production instruments and the other class gets only a very meagre amount that is only enough to guarantee the continued living of this class so that it may continue to work for the former class. That is the class conflict .which, according to Marx, is the basis of every other conflict and contradiction

This class conflict from social point of view is the outcome of class war between the proprietor class and the worker class. The clash between these two classes grows in intensity with the development of the production instruments and the progress and complexity of the industrial means, for with the development of the production instruments the standard of life comes down and that gives the capitalist class an .excuse to lower the wages of the worker

As we know, the capitalists try not to give the workers more than that on which they can subsist. As production instruments develop and the living expenses come down, the capitalist on the one hand tries to reduce the wages of the workers, and on the other, with the development of the production instruments he gets an opportunity to reduce number of workers gradually and extract more work from a lesser number of .them, for an improved industrial instruments can do the job of many workers

Accordingly

the capitalists retrench the surplus workers with the result that the conflict and differences between the two classes grow to the extent that they ultimately .culminate in a revolution and an explosion

This revolution is mainly brought about by the working class, which will ultimately put an end to the class conflict and succeed in converting whole society into a unified classless unit, all members of which will form one class only. Only then all contradictions will be eliminated, for the basis of every contradiction is the class contradiction. When this contradiction will vanish, other secondary contradictions will .also disappear

This is a very brief summary of the viewpoint of the materialistic revolutionaries regarding the contradiction or conflict, the solution of which we are seeking. It may be mentioned that this limited and short-sighted theory does not correspond with the .reality, nor does it tally with the historical facts

Actually the factor which brings about historical events is neither the class contradiction nor the development of the tools of production. In fact it is man, the maker of the tools, who brings about historical events. As for contradiction the .European man himself is extensively responsible for it

The production instruments never set up a capitalist system. It was the European man who when production instruments fell into his hand, established this system to put his own values of life into practice. It is also to be noted that the class .contradiction is not the only form of social contradiction

Several other forms of

contradiction in the social field also do exist. The class contradiction is not even the most important of these forms. In fact all these contradictions in the social field are the products of a basic conflict in man himself involving a hidden tussle in his inner .content which regularly and ceaselessly appears in different forms of contradiction

Now let us draw a comparison between the short-sighted view of the materialists and the reality shown by human experience, and find out which of the above mentioned two theories more corresponds with the world in which we live, so that we may know .what future developments we can expect

Should the theory of the materialists and their interpretation of all contradictions as the class contradiction be correct, would we not be justified in expecting that the class contradiction and conflict between the capitalists and the workers in the industrial societies of Europe having well developed industrial tools, would be going up day by ?day

Should we suppose that in industrial societies like those of England, America, France and Germany class contradiction has greatly gone up and class conflict is growing in intensity day by day? If that were so, the exploiting system of these countries should be decaying progressively and should be on the verge of collapse and annihilation, for the wealth of the exploiting capitalist class of America, England, France, etc is .growing

We were waiting for such a development and expecting that the difficulties of the capitalist countries would grow, the European and

the American workers would come to believe in the necessity of a revolution and would regard it as the only way of resolving class conflict. This was the right conclusion, had the Marxist idea of the interpretation of contradiction been correct. .But what has happened in history proves direct to the contrary

Unfortunately we see that the capitalist system in the capitalist countries is being more and more firmly established day by day and there are no signs of its early collapse. All the sweet hopes of our materialist revolutionaries that because of the development of production instruments and industrialization of these countries a revolution would hit England and other industrial countries of Europe, have come to .naught

Against all these predictions revolution has taken place in such countries as Czarist Russia and China where production instruments had not developed, industrialization had not taken place and where no class contradiction as defined by Marx existed or .should have existed

On the other hand the position of the workers in the industrialized countries did not diminish. Actually their income increased, they got more advantages and comforts, .and their importance grew in the eyes of the exploiting capitalists

The income of an ordinary American worker is far more than that of any manual worker in any socialist country. The position of workers in the capitalist countries has tremendously improved. The workers and their representatives have organized themselves on semi-democratic lines. They have gained political importance. They neither think of a revolution, nor do they

accept its logic. They live hand in glove with the capitalists and believe in obtaining .their rights through their representatives and the parliament

According to our thinking all this has happened in a very short time. Then how has it happened? Was Marx too suspicious of the capitalist exploiters and for that reason he made such predictions, which proved false, without a single one of them having come true even by chance? Was it a sort of mistrust on the part of Marx in these exploiters? Have the capitalists ever been afraid of Marx, Marxism or the liberation movements of the world? Have they condescended to allow a part of their income to pass to the workers because they were afraid of the workers' revolt against them? Has the .American millionaire any apprehensions in this respect

Even the most optimist of those who look forward to a revolution cannot expect a real revolution in America against oppression earlier than a hundred years henceforth. Then how can it be believed that the American millionaires have any apparition of fear before them because of which they have surrendered a part of their profits? Or alternatively can we believe that the American capitalists have become pious all of a ?sudden

Have their hearts been filled with the light of Islam like the Muslims of the early period of Islam who did not recognize any limits for their cooperation, tolerance and equality ?with other people and shared the booty gained by them with their Muslim brethren

Have

the capitalists of the west embraced Islam or has their hearts been converted into that of the Muslims? None of these things has happened. Karl Marx was not too suspicious of the capitalists. He held a correct opinion about them. Neither had any fear of the workers gripped the hearts of the capitalists and forced them to surrender a part of their profits to the workers in order to quieten them, nor has the heart of the capitalists been shaken by piety and fear of God. They are not aware of piety and so .long as they are absorbed in their pleasures and passions, they will never be

Then what has happened and how should the happenings of everyday be interpreted? Actually what has happened is the result of another contradiction which from the beginning has accompanied the class contradiction but Marx and his .comrades failed to discover it

They could only know the contradiction that existed between the American millionaire and the American worker and that existed between the British capitalist and the British worker. But they ignored the bigger contradiction resulting from the conflict .and clash between the Europeans and the non-Europeans

This contradiction, the symbol of which the European himself is, conceals class contradiction and holds its operation in abeyance for a considerably long time. What is the nature of this contradiction? We believe that with a cursory glance we can see this contradiction and put our finger on it, for we do not believe that class contradiction

.is the only form of contradiction

As we have said, man's inner conflict constantly continues to create new forms of contradiction. There are some forms of it in which American or European capitalism plays no part. There are still other forms in which sometimes the capitalists and the workers or the oppressors and the oppressed join hands to become a party of the .contradiction

In this case they forget all their differences and join together to create a contradiction far bigger than all the contradictions which have existed from the beginning of history until now. Now the question is that if the capitalists and the workers of the West form ?one party to this contradiction, where is the other party

The other party are we and you, that is the poor countries of the world, known today as the third world, that is the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. These .countries form the second pole of this contradiction

Both the social classes of Europe have agreed to extend their battlefield to the poor countries and to exploit them. They have conspired to create the biggest contradiction. This contradiction has many colonial forms. It begins when the European or the American sets out from his country to explore the underground minerals all over the world in order to snatch the wealth of the poor nations of various .countries

This contradiction counteracts the class contradiction and even nullifies it, for all classes get equal interest in grabbing this wealth. The whole or

at least the greater part of the immense riches in the hands of the capitalist class of the capitalist countries comes as the war booty obtained through the raids of the white men in the poor countries. The immense affluence enjoyed by the Western countries is not the result of the sweat of the European worker's brow, nor is the .result of the class conflict between the capitalist and the worker

This immense affluence is due to the oil of Asia and Latin America, to the diamonds of Tanzania, to the iron ore, tin, copper and uranium of the various African countries, to the cotton of Egypt, to the tobacco of Lebanon and to the wine of Algeria. Yes, the wine of Algeria, for the colonial non-Muslim power which colonized Algeria converted .all its lands into vineyards so that wine might be produced from their grapes

This wine was supplied to the workers also to win their hearts by intoxicating them in order to persuade them to cooperate with the capitalists. The Algerian were allowed to drink Algerian wine and pluck grapes. They are nice things, but obtained from the sources mentioned by us. From these sources they got intoxicated by the Algerian .wine

Thus the bigger contradiction that exists between the two classes of the capitalist countries on the one hand and the poor countries on the other. This contradiction has .superceded class contradiction in the western world, and brought it to a standstill

In these circumstances the European and the

American capitalists deemed it advisable to grant to their workers a part of the booty they seized by plundering you and me, that is the poor and the weak of the world. They agreed that they and their workers both should enjoy the wine of Algeria and .both should bedeck their wives with the diamonds from Tanzania

So we see that as predicted by Marx the life style of the worker has improved. But this change is neither due to the generosity and broadmindedness of the European and the American capitalist nor to his piety, but is due to his feeling that out of his big booty he should give some share, a very small share, to the European and the .American worker also to keep him satisfied

History has recorded only that contradiction which has always existed. This should not lead us to think that there is only one form of social contradiction. It has many forms, but all of them spring from one basic source, which is man's inner conflict, which produces varied forms of contradiction. If man gets rid of one form, he may fall prey .to another form

Therefore we should not confine contradiction to the class contradiction between the haves and the have nots. However, if we succeed in resolving this basic contradiction all other contradictions will be resolved automatically. Though social contradictions .are innumerable, they all amount to the exploitation of the weak by the strong

Effect of Man's Contact with Nature and with other Man

point

Previously we explained that the line of man's

contact with nature is different from that of man's contact with his fellow beings, and that each of these two lines is comparatively independent of the other. But this comparative independence does not mean that these two lines do not influence each .other in any way

In fact both of them affect each other positively as well as negatively. It is this reciprocal effect which produces the relationship that has been mentioned by the Qur'an. The first contact, that is man's contact with nature, affects man's relations .with his fellow human beings

Similarly the second contact, that is man's contact with other men affects man's relations with nature. Briefly it may be said that the more man gains control over nature and natural resources and the more he acquires improved production :implements, the more there is a chance for him to exploit other men. The Qur'an says

Nay, but surely man is rebellious when he thinks himself independent. (Surah al-Alaq, (۹۶:۶-۷

This verse refers to this very relationship. It means to say that the more man becomes able to exploit nature, to control it and to utilize improved tools of production, the more he becomes selfish in his relations with other men and uses the .means at his disposal to exploit the weak

Take into consideration a society which earns its livelihood by means of hunting with hands, stones or sticks. The members of such a society cannot withstand the power-seeking stronger men. They can do nothing to frustrate the plans of wealthy

brutes. Their power of production being limited, what can these laborious people do in ?the face of the evil schemes of social exploiters

No one among them can normally earn more than one day's subsistence. Therefore in such a society there can be no possibility of any large scale exploitation as it exists .today. In their case the exploitation can be at the most on individual level

On the other hand take into consideration a developed society in which man can manufacture steam engines and huge electric equipments. In such a society man bends nature to his will. The developed and complex machinery at his disposal provides him with a means to develop his relations with other men and to acquire a .capability and power of exploitation

At this stage he feels inclined to exert himself more and more to give a practical shape to his potential capabilities. With the mechanical and electrical power in his hand he can easily set up an exploiting capitalist system. In fact he is stimulated to use his exploiting power as he gets an opportunity to do so. His inner tussle and contradiction impel him to utilize in the social field of the production power and the production .instruments at his disposal

Historical Materialism Has No Role in History

The only difference between us and the advocates of historical materialism is that according to historical materialism it is production instruments which bring exploitation into existence and create a system conducive to it, whereas we do not believe that the production instruments do any

such thing. These instruments are no more than tools. They may provide an opportunity, but it is man who sets up a system, takes positive or negative action, is .honest or dishonest and is industrious or lazy

It is man alone who acts and he invariably acts according to his inner content. He chooses his ideal and decides to what extent he should be attached to it. This is the view expressed by the Qur'an in respect of men's mutual relations. Earlier we .described these relations as the first contact

As for the second contact, that is man's contact with nature, the Qur'an is, in short, of the opinion that the more the man's mutual relations are based on fairness and equity and are free from every kind of injustice and exploitation, the more pleasant becomes the relation between man and nature, the more treasures of natural resources become available to man and the blessings of Allah are showered on him from the heaven and the earth. Many verses of the Qur'an mention this relationship. Some of :these verses are as under

If they tread the right path, We shall give them to drink o f water in abundance. (Surah (al-Jinn, ۷۲:۱۶

If they had observed the Tawrat and the Injil and that which was revealed to them from their Lord, they would surely have been nourished from above them and from (beneath their feet. (Surah al-Ma'idah, ۵:۶۶

If the people of the townships had believed and kept from evil, surely We should have

opened blessings from the sky and from the earth. But they disbelieved, and so We seized them on account of what they used to earn. (Surah al-A'raf, ۷:۹۶)

As a consequence of this relationship, just social relations have an impact on the utilization of the natural resources. The more these relations are just, the better is the utilization. Justice in man's contact with his fellow beings manifests itself in man's contact with nature. It is in a just society that man's contact with nature thrives. It does not flourish well in an unjust society.

This relationship not only has a supernatural aspect in which we believe, but it also throws light on a divine norm, because according to the Qur'an an unjust society like that of Pharaoh has always been a decadent society. Over history whenever tyrannical policies have been pursued, these policies have culminated in the wastage of the energy of society, in dissensions among the different sections of it and in the destruction of the potentialities of its members.

In this state of disintegration and loss of cohesion it is not possible for the members of society to mobilize their potential resources and gain control over nature. Here lies the difference between choosing the supreme ideal and adopting the inferior and abject ideals.

The true and monotheistic ideal closes the ranks of society and does away with all differences of blood, race, nationality, class or geography. It unites the entire humanity under the banner of monotheism. But a low ideal

.splits humanity and disunites society

:Just see what Allah says in respect of the supreme ideal

Surely this, your ummah (community) is one ummah, and I am your Lord. So worship (Me. (Surah al-Ambiya, ۲۱:۹۲

Surely this, your ummah is one ummah, and I am your Lord. So have fear of me. ((Surah al-Mu'minun, ۲۳:۵۲

This is the logic of the supreme ideal which recognizes no frontiers within human society. Now reflect on what Allah says about a society oppressed by the false gods :and see how He describes such a society

Surely Fir`awn exalted himself in the earth and divided its people into castes. (Surah (al Qasas, ۲۸:۴

Pharaoh is the symbol of the low ideals which base man's contact with other men on oppression and exploitation. The Pharaohs split and impoverish society and give prominence to class interests. They destroy man's creative power and stifle the growth of his relations with nature. The Pharaohs divide society into the groups and :sections detailed here

I. The first group is that of the oppressed oppressors. They are the oppressors who are at the same time the oppressed also. They may be called the second class oppressors. The Imams have called them `Lackeys of the unjust' and the `friends of .'the oppressors

The oppressed oppressors support the tyrants and the despots. The existence of the :oppressors and the continuance of their reigns depend on them. The Qur'an says

But oh, if you could see, when the wrongdoers are brought up before their Lord, how they cast the blame

on to another; how those who were despised on the earth say to those who were (proud: But for you we would have been believers. (Surah an-Nur, ۲۴:۳۱

As may be observed, speaking about the oppressors the Qur'an divides them into two groups, one being that of despised oppressors and the other that of proud oppressors. That shows that among the oppressors also there are some who are despised and others who are arrogant and proud. The Pharaohs - like people are the proud oppressors and those who are their henchmen are the despised or the .oppressed oppressors

On the Day of Resurrection these oppressed oppressors will be raised along with the :proud oppressors and there they will say to the latter

" .But for you we would have been believers"

.This is the first group of the oppressors on which the arrogant oppressors depend

II. In an unjust society the second group of the oppressors consists of the sycophants and the hangers-on. They may not do any injustice direct with their own hand, but they encourage the oppressors and justify all their actions. In this respect the Qur'an :says

The Chiefs of Pharaoh's people said to him: `Will you allow Moses and his people to make mischief in the land and flout you and your gods?' He said: `We will slay their (sons and spare their women, for we possess power over them.' (Surah al-A'raf, ۷:۱۲۷

Their role was to incite Fir'awn (Pharaoh). They could strike the right chord of his heart at

the right moment. Fir'awn was in need of what they said. Therefore they competed with each other in finding out what was in his heart so that they could bring the current situation in harmony with his feelings and sentiments.

III. In an unjust society the third group consists of those whom Imam Ali has described as "automatons". They allow themselves to be the tools of others and do not realize that any wrong has been done to them. They are unconscious of any injustice. Their actions are mechanical, involuntary and without any consciousness of their subservience and obedience. They are deprived of their intelligence by the despot. They submit to him of their own accord and accept whatever he says without the least reluctance.

They do not allow even themselves to criticize any of his actions, what to say of others. In its treatment of nature this group loses all power of initiative and capability of development and is converted into a tool having no will power. If the members of this group still have any initiative, that initiative is controlled by the despot who operates these tools. They themselves are no longer men who can think and use their initiative in any way. In respect of them Allah says:

They say: `Our Lord! We obeyed our chiefs and great men, and they misled us from the way.' (Surah al-Ahzab, ۳۳:۶۷)

In what they say there is no indication of the feeling that any wrong has been done to them. They

.speak of blind and illogical obedience only

According to the classification of men mentioned by Imam Ali, the Commander of the faithful, these people form the third category. He has said: "There are three categories of men: divine scholars, pupils seeking salvation and aimlessly buzzing flies ".following the cry of everybody

This third category creates difficulties for a decent society. These difficulties will be removed and the way opened only in proportion to the success of a good society in doing away with this category and converting it into the second category mentioned by Imam Ali, that is those pupils seeking salvation, or in the words of the Qur'an, that of the followers of goodness, or in the terminology of the jurists, that of the eager .disciples

Imam Ali holds that it is necessary for a good and decent society to convert this category of the aimlessly buzzing flies having neither intelligence nor will and incited by every puff of wind. The Imam believes in this elimination of the category, but he does not want to exterminate its existence. He wants it to be converted into the second category so that a decent society may pursue its policy of opening new venues of progress and giving every member an opportunity to participate in this .process

In contrast, the despotic rulers do every thing to increase the number of such mean persons who change their direction with every sound. As a result of their policy society is drawn step by step to ruin, and these

.despots find themselves unable to defend its integrity

The more the number of the persons belong to this category increases, the more acute becomes the danger of the ruin of society in case of any internal mishap or an external exigency. That is how societies accelerate the process of their natural death. Evidently the death of a society or that of a nation or community means its natural .death, not its physical death

Societies undergo two kinds of death, one natural and the other trivial. A society meets its natural death as a result of the increase in the number of the persons belonging to this third category, which causes disaster and ruins society. This was the .account of the third category in a split and despotic society

IV. The fourth category consists of those who do not approve injustice, and have not renounced their power of understanding in favour of the Pharaohs. They do not like .injustice, yet they accept it quietly without any protest

Consequently they always live in a state of perplexity and restlessness. This mental state is detrimental to new discoveries in the development of relations between man and nature. According to the following Qur'anic verse such persons are unjust to :themselves

When the angels take away the lives of those who have been unjust to themselves, they ask them: 'In what circumstances were you?' They answer: `We were helpless in our land.' The angels say: `Was not the earth of Allah vast enough for you to emigrate?' (Surah

(an-Nisa, ۴:۹۷

They have not been unjust to others. Like the first group they are not the oppressed oppressors, nor are they the toadies and servile sycophants. They are also not the aimlessly buzzing flies having no intelligence or will. They are conscious of their being .powerless and oppressed

" .They say: We were powerless in our land"

They have not lost their faculty of understanding and hence are conscious of their sorry plight. But practically they are slothful and indolent. That is why the Qur'an describes them as being unjust to themselves. Can this group be expected to take initiative and do something good to be able to take a step forward in the field of man's .contact with nature? Naturally no such thing can be expected of these people

V. The fifth group of the despots consists of those who escape from the stage of life to practice monkish life. This state has existed in all despotic societies over history. It may be analysed in two ways. One kind of monastic life is real and true in which man keeps himself away from society under strict self-discipline with a view to save himself from the pollution of his environment and social impurities. Islam rejects this kind of life and calls it an unhealthy innovation. The Qur'an calls it

".the monkish life which they have invented"

Monastic life is bad because it has only a negative basis. It implies the renunciation of man's responsibility as Allah's vicegerent on the earth, which is

.not permissible

Another kind of monkish life is the affected monkery, which means to assume artificially the manners and the dress of the monks without renouncing the world from the depth of one's heart. The persons who practice it deceive the people and beguile them of the tyranny of the despots, but mentally and spiritually they are supporters of :the tyrants. The Qur'an speaks of this group and says

Many of the Jewish rabbis and the Christian monks devour the wealth of others want (only debar them from the way of Allah. (Surah at-Tawbah, ۹:۳۴

VI. The sixth or the last group of despots is that of the oppressed. When the despotic rulers divide society into groups, they choose one group to be oppressed. That is what Fir'awn did. He divided his people into castes and oppressed the people of one caste, who led the opposition to him and were his known opponents. He did not care for their :dignity while persecuting them. The Qur'an says

And (remember) when We did deliver you from Fir`awn's folk, who were afflicting you with dreadful torment, slaying your sons and sparing your women. That was a (tremendous trial from your Lord. (Surah al-Baqarah, ۲:۴۹

The Qur'an tells us what the final fate of each of these groups will be after the :oppression is over. Concerning the last group it says

We like to favour those who have been regarded weak in the land and want to make (them leaders and inheritors. (Surah al Qasas, ۲۸: ۵

This

verse refers to the sixth group which is misfit in a despotic category. Allah intends to grant them leadership of the land and to make them masters of it. This is another norm of history about which we will talk shortly. So far we have mentioned the fact that the relations between man and nature deteriorate in proportion to the injustice .that prevails in a society

Injustice does not allow full exploitation of nature for the benefit of man. On the contrary relations between man and nature flourish in society to the extent that justice and struggle against injustice prevail in it. In such a society creative forces are .used to exploit nature

A despotic society being split and disintegrated, its capabilities and potentialities go waste. The sky withholds rains from falling on it and the earth refrains from granting its blessings to it. Exactly the opposite prevails in a just society. In it all capabilities and potentialities join together. Such a society will be established following the .(appearance of Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his advent and solace

Islamic traditions give enough detail, of the bounties and blessings which will follow his appearance. That will be so because wherever justice is established, man's contact with nature blooms and a new relationship between man and nature is .established

Basis of Constant and changeable Laws of Islam

The previous discussion leads us to an important conclusion. When in the light of the Qur'an we look at the elements constituting society and the periods through which these social elements have

passed, and study the two lines of social relations, namely that of the mutual relations of men and that of men's relation with nature, we discover an important analytical .theory

Our analysis shows that although these two lines are relatively independent, yet in a way they affect each other reciprocally. These views which have been deduced from the Qur'an through the analysis of social elements and study of the social relations, .explain the basis of the legislation and law-giving in Islam

The relative independence of the two lines, namely the social relations of men with each other and men's relations with nature constitutes the basis of the stipulated rules of Islamic law which have a permanent character, whereas the reciprocal effect of these two lines of relationship is the basis of the Islamic laws which are not .stipulated and therefore are changeable

Those elements of the Islamic law which are not permanently fixed are a legal reaction of the reciprocal effect of these two lines in the same way as the permanently fixed elements of the Islamic law are a legal reaction of the relative .independence of these two lines

That is why we believe that all procedures of Islamic law consist of two sections: firm elements and changeable elements. The elements not permanently fixed leave a gap to be filled in by the Muslim authorities on the basis of the standard guidance provided .by Islam

A detailed study of this subject requires further explanation, and Allah willing, we shall deal with it fully

with a view to coordinate the legal aspects of Islam in the light of the view expressed .by the Qur'an in respect of the social elements

There is another question that concerns Islamic views about the man's historical :periods on the earth. The Qur'an divides man's life on the earth into three stages

,i) Nursing stage)

,ii) Stage of Unity)

iii) Stage of Disunity and Disintegration)

Each one of these stages, about which the Qur'an has talked, has its own special characteristics and signs. Only a detailed study of these characteristics and signs can .enable us to have a complete view of the stages of man's life on the earth

As this discussion cannot be completed in one day or at one meeting it is better to postpone it to some other occasion (It is a matter of great regret that owing to the heinous attack on his life by the Iraqi Ba'ath party executioners of the despotic regime of accursed Saddam, the late Ayatullah Sayyid Mohammad Baqir Sadr could not get .(the time to which he had postponed his research work

Ayatullah's Heart to Heart Talk to the Religious Scholars

Instead of submitting them to our thinking and reason we want to submit our hearts to a critical examination in the light of the Qur'an. We want to see what feelings our hearts have in respect of that which we love. We want to know to what they are attached. Allah has said that one heart cannot hold two genuine and fully developed .loves

.One can either love Allah or love this world

.But both the loves cannot be contained in one heart

Let us submit our hearts to test. Let us examine our hearts to see whether the love of Allah or the love of this world prevails over them. If the love of Allah prevails over our hearts, let us make it deeper and more effective. If, Allah forbid, the love of this world .prevails over them, let us try to save us from this dreadful malady and fatal disease

Every love which occupies the centre of the heart of a person is of either of the two kinds. We call the perfect love the double grade love and the love which is not so perfect the single grade love. To begin with, love becomes the basis of man's .sentiments, feelings, emotions and desires

After attending to his job or immediate need, man soon returns to his object of love, because love occupies the centre of his thoughts, feelings and sentiments. Sometimes man may be absorbed in his conversation, may be attending to his work, his food or drink or may be facing some other problem, but love remains the centre of his activity all the time and his attention is diverted frequently to the object of his love. This is the .single grade love

In the case of the double grade love man's entire attention is drawn by the object of his love and nothing can divert his attention from it. Wherever he turns his face, he sees his beloved. He is never

.inattentive to the thought of his beloved. This love is double grade love

.These two kinds of love are applicable to love of Allah as well as to love of this world

Both these kinds of love are found in the case of the noble love of Allah. Single grade love appears in the hearts of the pious believers whose hearts are free from the impurities of the base affairs of the world. Their sentiments and feelings become .subservient to their love of Allah

Although they attend to their food at the time of taking their meals, pay attention to their physical needs, meet their friends, go to parks for walking and perform miscellaneous acts, yet all the time the centre of their interest is one and the same. As soon as they are free from their immediate engagements, they return to the question .which is the object of their love

As for the double grade love, it is found in the hearts of the Prophets and the Imams. You all know Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, in the vicinity of whose tomb we live (Najaf Ashraf, Iraq). This great man has said: "I never saw a thing but I saw Allah before it, after it ".and along with it

In fact, it was so because love of Allah occupied his great heart and conscience in such a way that it concealed everything else from him. Even when he saw human beings, he saw Allah. He looked at them as Allah's bondmen. When he

looked at Allah's bounties, he remembered Him. This bond with Allah was always present before his eyes, for it was Allah alone whom he truly loved and to whom alone .his hopes and aspiration were directed

He never allowed anybody to divert his attention from Allah and thus all the time he saw only Allah. These two grades of love are applicable to love of this world also, the '.love of which, in the words of the Holy Prophet, is the root-cause of all errors

There are two grades of love of this world. The first stage of this love is the concentration of one's activities, hopes and trends on seeking worldly gains. A person having this love moves when his personal interest demands so and stops when it does not. Whenever he deems it fit, he devotes himself to the worship of Allah and when he .does not, he does something else

Thus this world is his first consideration, although sometimes he ignores it and engages himself in some noble acts also. He sometimes offers prayers and keeps fast. But before long he returns to his main interest. This is the single grade love of .worldly gains

Even this state of love of this world is a dangerous malady. But the double grade love of worldly gains becomes fatal, when one totally closes one's eyes and ears. Exactly what Imam Ali, the Commander of the faithful said in connection with love of Allah, applies to the double grade love of

.this world also

The Imam used to say that whatever he saw, he saw Allah before it, after it and along with it. Love of this world also reaches this stage when man does not see anything but he sees this world before it, after it and along with it. Whatever he does at this stage, .he does it for some worldly gain

If he offers prayers, keeps fast or even engages himself in teaching or discussing theological subjects, all actions of him are characterized by some sort of worldly interest. He cannot look at anything except through the window of self-aggrandizement. He wants worldly return from everything that he does. Whatever he .does, he does it to acquire some position, post or financial gain

Yet he cannot devote himself to pious deeds for more than a few days. This is double grade world - seeking which is far more dangerous than single grade world-seeking. That is why the Holy Prophet has said that love of this world is the root cause of every .error

Imam Sadiq has said: "This world is like sea water. The more one drinks of it, the more ".one gets thirsty

Do not say: "There is no harm if I make a little worldly gain and be content with it or acquire some position and then turn to Allah." The fact is that the more money or worldly position you secure, the thirstier you get and the more attracted to worldly things you feel. No doubt this world

.is like brackish sea water. Its love is the root-cause of all errors

The Holy Prophet says: "He who is mostly concerned with worldly affairs, has nothing ".to do with Allah

In other words, his relation with Allah is severed, for one heart cannot contain two loves. That is why it has been said that love of this world is the root-cause of all errors. It makes prayers and every other form of worship devoid of their significance. If your heart is dominated by love of this world, your acts of worship can have no meaning. You and I know the people who criticized the conduct of Imam Ali. They were those who never missed their prayers, who

were particular about their fasting and who did not touch wine. At least most of them did not. But what is the value of such prayers? What is the result of such fasts? If a person's heart is full of love of this world, what is the use of his abstaining from the ?intoxicants

Love of this world does not allow man to see or learn the realities. As love of this world is the root-cause of every error, similarly love of Allah is the source of all virtues. Love of Allah confers on man honour, purity, chastity and power to overcome all his .weaknesses

It was love of Allah that impelled the magicians of Fir'awn's folk to become the first to :follow the way of Prophet Musa. They said to Fir'awn boldly

Issue any order you

(like. The life of this world is going to pass. (Surah TaHa, ۲۰:۷۲

How did the magicians dare to say that? They could say so because love of Allah had illuminated their hearts. It was love of Allah that was the basis of Imam Ali's courage and bravery. His courage was not that of a ferocious beast. It was the courage that is produced by faith and love of Allah. His bravery was that which is shown by the warriors, but he also had the courage of rejecting what is wrong, and being steadfast and firm. He was over ۶۰ when he took the field against the Khawarij and in a successful engagement single-handedly killed ۴۰۰۰ of them. This is an example of the .utmost bravery in the battlefield

He was so intoxicated with love of Allah that he did not think for a moment that he alone was facing ۴۰۰۰ people. He was also at the height of bravery in regard to being patient and not pressing his rightful claim. He kept quiet when he was required by Islam to overlook his right and be patient. At that time he was in the prime of his life. .He had not grown aged. His conscience was a flame with the fire of youth

But Islam had told him to keep quiet and be patient, even if his right was violated. He was to keep quiet so long as the externalities of Islam were being maintained and the religious rites were being

.observed

This was the height of bravery as far as patience was concerned. It was not the bravery of the ferocious animals. It was the courage of a brave believer absorbed in love of Allah who reached the peak of bravery by practicing self-negation. Do you know what his reaction was when Caliphate was offered to him on conditions contrary to the Qur'an and Sunnah (conduct of the Holy Prophet) following the assassination of ?Uthman, the Second Caliph

He rejected the offer outright because its terms, which were contrary to the Qur'an and Sunnah could not be acceptable to him. From here we see that Imam Ali never felt concerned for himself. He felt concerned for Allah and His religion. Hence this was not a case of bravery in the battlefield. It was a case of bravery in the field of .patience. He had the courage to refuse as well as the courage to keep quiet

This courage was inculcated in Imam Ali's heart by love of Allah, not by mere belief in Him for this belief is shared by the philosophers of the West also. Aristotle also believed in Allah. Plato, Farabi and others also believed in Him. But what have they done for humanity? What have they done for this world or the next? Belief alone is not .enough. Only love of Allah added to belief in Him does wonders

We are the people most befitted for renouncing this world, and divorcing it. If love of ,this world is a sin

it should be considered to be the biggest sin as far as we the students of theology are .concerned

It is necessary for us to be more careful in this respect than others, for we call ourselves the leaders of the way to salvation. Then what is our function and our duty in this world? If somebody asks you what duty you perform and how do you justify your existence, what will you say? You will say that you draw the attention of the people to the Hereafter, and to the Divine world and to Allah. Then how can you sever ?your world from the Hereafter

If your world is not linked to the Hereafter, then you link the people to your own world and not to Allah's Hereafter. In that case you become the highwaymen of the way to Allah, which is not the right way between any two cities. Our duty is to lead the people .to the way of Allah. We have shouldered this responsibility

We are committed to lead the people by holding their hand. If we ourselves turn to any other way, we will be obstructing people from going to the right path. Anyone whose heart is overpowered by love of this world, is ruined. But when love of this world overpowers the hearts of us, the students of theology, we not only ruin ourselves, but we ruin others also, for we have placed ourselves in a position of responsibility and in a place where we should

.bind people to Allah

But unfortunately we are not conscious in our hearts of Allah's presence, and that is why we are unable to discharge our duty. As we have greater responsibility, it is necessary for us to refrain from loving this world. We claim to be the heirs of the Holy Prophet and the Imams. We claim to be following the way of the Holy Prophet, Imam Ali, Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn (Peace be on them), and to have a special .relationship with them

Do we not want that we should have a living consciousness of this great relationship? This relationship makes our position more sensitive and more delicate than that of others, because we narrate the sayings, teachings and guidance of the Holy Prophet and the Imams and consider ourselves to be nearer than anybody else to the words, manners and sciences of the Holy Prophet and the Imams. Has not the Holy Prophet said: "We the Prophets do not leave gold, silver, or property as our inheritance. Only ".knowledge and wisdom are our legacy

Imam Ali said: "This Caliphate of yours has no value to me. What is important to me is to establish some truth or to destroy some falsehood." Did Imam Ali not say so? Did he not act according to this view throughout his life? He worked for his beloved Allah, not for himself. Had Imam Ali sought the world and worked for it, he would really have been the most unfortunate man on the

.face of the earth, for from his early childhood he had carried his life in his hand

He defended the Prophet of Allah and fought for his cause and his divine mission. He never wavered for a single moment. He did not care for his life, and was never afraid of his death. He carried his life in his hand. He was more obedient to the Holy Prophet during his lifetime and after his death than anybody else. He worked for the cause of Allah more than all others. More than others he underwent all sorts of hardships and sufferings for the cause of Islam. Why did Imam Ali make all these efforts? What was ?his aim

If we look at the things from a worldly point of view, Imam Ali did not get any thing out of his efforts. In the matter of Caliphate he was pushed aside. For all his efforts he had to pass a retired life for a long time. Was not this great man abused and cursed? Was he not cursed from the pulpits which he himself had set up by dint of his blood ?and sacrifice

Thus Imam Ali did not acquire any worldly thing, neither wealth or property, nor any post or position, nor fame or renown. His work did not receive appreciation. Despite all this what did he say when Abdur Rahman ibn Muljam struck him with his sword on his head? At that moment this great Imam exclaimed: "By the Lord of

".the Ka'ba, I have succeeded

Imam Ali was not working for his personal profit. Whatever he was doing, he was doing for Allah's sake. So he thought that the time of meeting Allah had come. He would soon meet Allah, who would pay him his dues and would reward him for all the sufferings he had undergone. That is why he exclaimed: "By the Lord of the Ka'ba, I ".have succeeded

This Imam is our ideal. His life is a model for us? We believe that the Qur'an and the Sunnah are the sources of Islamic law? What is Sunnah? Does it mean anything other than the conduct - sayings, the deeds and the approvals of those who are infallible? It is our duty to refrain from loving this world. In fact we have no world to love. Should we love the world? Can we the students love this world and leave aside Allah's good .pleasure which is more important than everything else

Is it possible to leave aside what no eye has seen, no ear has heard and no heart has conceived? After all what is this world of ours? It is only a collection of imaginary and fictitious things. Of course the world of everybody is such, but our world is more fictitious than that of others. What can we get out of this world except that which is ?insignificant and paltry

We are not out of those people who plunder the wealth of others, nor are we out of those

who prefer this world to the Hereafter. Harun al-Rashid's world was very imposing. We often draw a comparison between his position and ours. We curse him day and night. But do you know to what extent Harun was engrossed in his world? Do you know what kind of world it was in which he was absorbed? In what lofty palaces did he live? What a luxurious life did he lead? What a grand and extensive empire did he ?possess

We say that we are better, more pious and more God fearing than Harun was. Has the world of Harun al-Rashid ever been offered to us and we have rejected it? If not, .how can we claim to be more pious than him

The world which has been offered to us is not that of Harun al-Rashid. As compared to his world, it is very limited and insignificant. It is transient and of short duration. It is a world which is not as vast and extensive as that of Harun al-Rashid. He looked at the clouds and said: -"Wherever you rain, you will rain in my dominion, and pour the taxes .into my treasury." For the sake of this world he threw Imam Musa Kazim into prison

?Are we sure if we get that world, won't we imprison Imam Musa Kazim

Have we tested ourselves? Have we put this question to ourselves? Each of us should put this question to himself and answer it between himself and his Allah. The world of Harun al-Rashid makes

.one bound to imprison Imam Musa Kazim

Has the world of Harun al-Rashid ever been put before us so that we could know whether we were more pious than him? What is our world? It is a distorted form of the world. It is a vain speculation. In our world there can be no real truth except that of Allah's good pleasure. In this respect every student of our seminary is like Imam Ali. Had the Imam worked for worldly gains, he would have been the most miserable .person. The gates of the world are always open

If a person seeking this world has the necessary capability, talent and intelligence, all doors are open to him. But if a student of theology works for this world, he is an unlucky man, for he loses this world as well as the next. This world is not for the students of theology. A student who is looking for this world, can get neither this world .nor the next

Therefore it is incumbent on us to confine our efforts to seeking the next world and to .inculcate love of Allah in our hearts, for this world should have no value to us

The Holy Imams have told us to remember death. That is the best cure of love of the world. We all know well that all men have to die, but we think that death is meant only for others, not for us. To exterminate love of this world from our hearts we should

.always keep the concept of our death before our eyes

We should think that any moment it is possible that we die. Each of us has had friends who have died. Our brothers have departed this world. At the time of his death my father was not as old as I am at present. My brother died at an age younger than mine now. I have now completed the span of my lifetime. It would not have been unreasonable if I had died at the age at which my father died or at the age at which .my brother died. Each of us should have a reminder of this sort before him

Many of our friends and relatives have passed away. All their hopes and aspirations have come to an end. Nothing has been left of them. If those who have gone to their Lord were working for this world, every thing concerning them has ended. Their death is a warning to us. That is what the Imams have taught us. We must always keep this warning in mind, so that we may suppress our lust for this worldly life, which may last .for a few days or perhaps a few months or at the most a few years

How can we exert ourselves on the presumption that the life is long-lasting? We may get an opportunity to work only for ten days. We may be able to defend our life only for a month or two. We do not know what

we are defending. Shall we be able to bear the consequences of the sins committed ?by us against Allah and against our religion during this period

What for should we bear these consequences? For the sake of the life of ten days or of a month or two months? This is not a good bargain. We ask Allah to purify our hearts, and to brighten them with faith. May He turn our mind more and more to seeking His pleasure and fill our hearts with His love, His fear and belief in Him. May .He help us act according to the teachings of His Book

.Ameen

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,- web kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

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:Address of the central office
Isfahan, Abdorazaq St, Haj Mohammad JafarAbadei Alley, Shahid Mohammad HasanTavakkoly Alley, Number plate ۱۲۹, first floor
Website: www.ghbook.ir
Email: Info@ghbook.ir
Central office Tel: ۰۳۱۳۴۴۹۰۱۲۵
۰۲۱ ـ Tehran Tel: ۸۸۳۱۸۷۲۲
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